

*The*  
KENTUCKY LINCOLNS  
*on Mill Creek*

By  
R. GERALD McMURTRY

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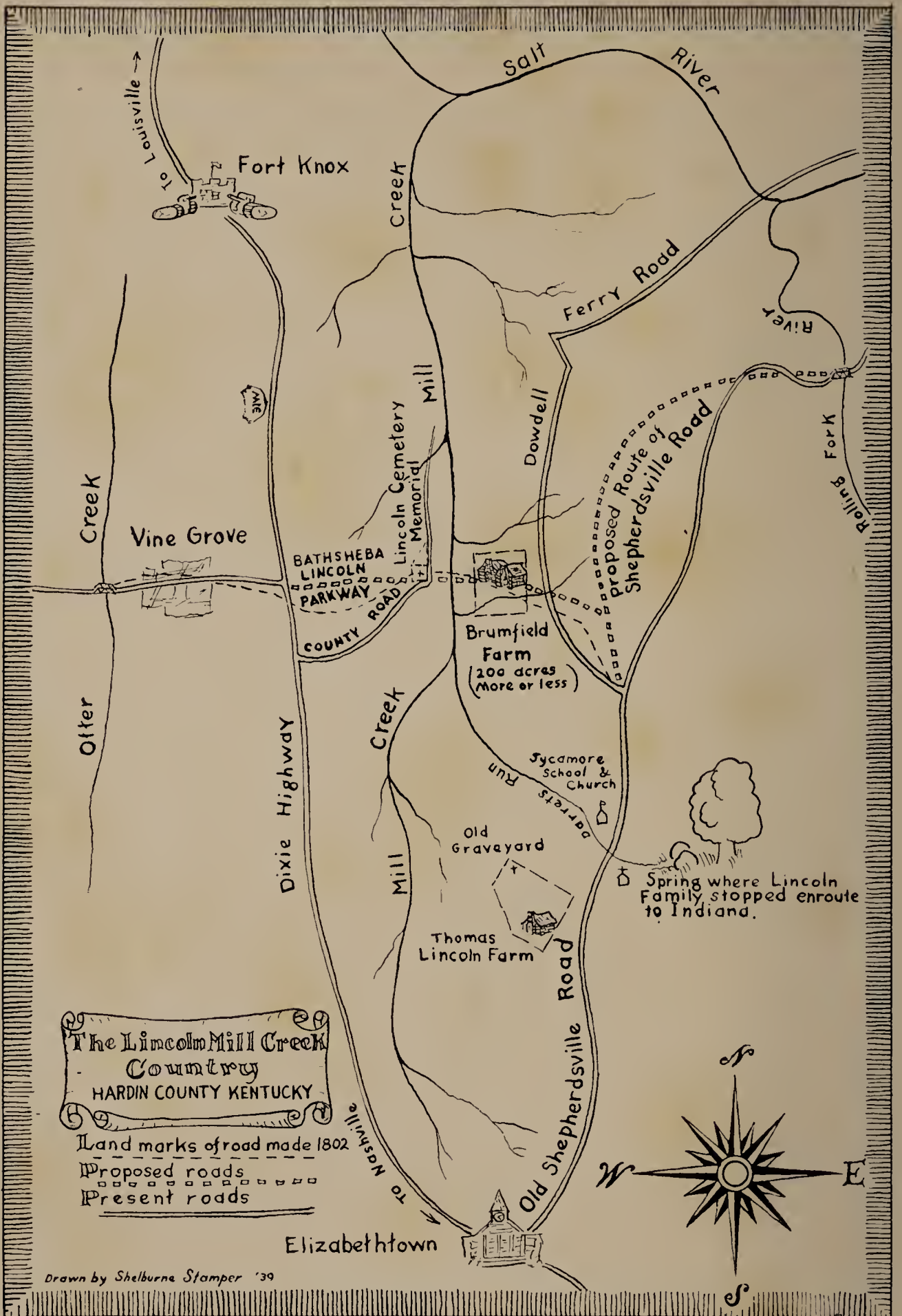
THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS  
ON MILL CREEK

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R. Gerald McMurtry







The Lincoln Mill Creek  
Country  
HARDIN COUNTY KENTUCKY

Land marks of road made 1802  
Proposed roads  
Present roads

Drawn by Shelburne Stamper '39

*The*  
KENTUCKY LINCOLNS  
*on Mill Creek*

By

R. GERALD McMURTRY

DEPARTMENT OF LINCOLNIANA  
LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY  
HARROGATE, TENNESSEE



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LESTER O. SCHRIVER

LINCOLN STUDENT AND FRIEND OF  
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## PREFACE

**S**TUDENTS and historians know only too well that there are many gaps in the story of the Lincoln family in Kentucky. The pioneer period of Kentucky, during the Lincolns' residence in that state, was obscure and uneventful, and the Lincolns were humble folk who would have lived and died in oblivion had not one inspired member of the clan broken the barrier of obscurity and emerged a leader of men.

Biographers in writing of the Sixteenth President have differed in treatment and subject material in regard to Abraham Lincoln's life and career, but their basic facts concerning the Lincoln family in Kentucky have been stereotyped and essentially the same. Certain scholarly works have been published concerning the life and parentage of Lincoln in Kentucky, but these have dealt sparingly with one remote section of Hardin County where Lincoln pioneers lived, worked, and now lie buried.

Lincoln has today loomed so large upon the horizon of American ideals and thought that anything newly discovered or related concerning his



## PREFACE

ancestry, life, family or environment is considered of interest. This work of fragmentary threads concerning the Kentucky Lincolns on Mill Creek, woven together into a study of a new locale—a new setting is believed to be a contribution to Lincoln literature. It is hoped that this work will bridge one gap of obscurity; namely, the Lincoln-Mill Creek country of Kentucky.

In preparing this work the author wishes to acknowledge the helpful suggestions and information supplied by Dr. Louis A. Warren; also especial mention should be made of Mr. G. E. McMurtry of Vine Grove, Kentucky, who has contributed valuable documentary and traditional data, and who more than any other person has worked untiringly to preserve the historic Lincoln sites of Mill Creek in Northern Hardin County.

*R. Gerald McMurtry*

Department of Lincolniana  
Lincoln Memorial University  
Harrogate, Tennessee.  
October 1, 1939.



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THREADS OF THE LINCOLN  
FABRIC



## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK COUNTRY

SINCE Abraham Lincoln's presidential campaign, in the year 1860, Hardin County, Kentucky, has been associated with the name of the Sixteenth President.<sup>1</sup> The birthplace farm, on the South Fork of Nolin River, and the Knob Creek farm, which was the site of the second cabin home of the president, have been widely publicized.<sup>2</sup> These two frontier homes were located

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<sup>1</sup> "I was not born at Elizabethtown, but my mother's first child, a daughter, two years older than myself, and now long since deceased, was. I was born February 12, 1809, near where Hodgenville now is, then in Hardin County." Abraham Lincoln to Samuel Haycraft, Jr., May 28, 1860. John G. Nicolay and John Hay: *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Volume VI, pages 21-22.

<sup>2</sup> "The log cabin in which Abraham Lincoln was born has become the best known home in all the universe. No structure where a man of any nation has dwelt is more quickly recognized by people the world around than the house of logs in which Abraham Lincoln first saw the light of day." *Lincoln Lore*, No. 381, "A Cabin of Universal Fame," July 27, 1936. *Lincoln Lore* is published by the Lincoln National Life Foundation of Fort Wayne, Indiana, and edited by Dr. Louis A. Warren.

The Knob Creek Farm was the Kentucky home which President Lincoln remembered when he was interviewed concerning his childhood days. In a letter addressed to Samuel Haycraft, Jr., Lincoln made the following statement:

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

in the section of old Hardin County, which is today a part of LaRue County.<sup>3</sup> Remotely situated in the northern portion of original Hardin County, an area now embraced within its present territorial limits, is to be found a community which might be called the Lincoln-Mill Creek country.<sup>4</sup> In this community there are several neglected sites associated with the father of the president and the pioneer Lincoln family.

Here is a country isolated from the outside world, and here people live with the soil. No Lincoln community in America appears so primitive as does the Mill Creek country. While it is

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“The place on Knob Creek, . . ., I remember very well; but I was not born there. As my parents have told me, I was born on Nolin, very much nearer Hodgen’s Mill than the Knob Creek place is. My earliest recollection, however, is of the Knob Creek place.” Abraham Lincoln to Samuel Haycraft, Jr., June 4, 1860. Nicolay and Hay: *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Volume VI, page 39.

The Lincoln farm on Knob Creek is the only tract of land on which Abraham Lincoln lived for a considerable time, that has not been converted into a state or national shrine. Undoubtedly the Knob Creek farm will one day be a state or national reservation.

<sup>3</sup> “LaRue County, the 98th of formation, was formed in 1843, out of the southeastern part of Hardin County, and named in honor of John LaRue.” Lewis Collins and Richard H. Collins: *History of Kentucky*, Volume II, “LaRue County,” page 456.

<sup>4</sup> Mill Creek is a tributary of Salt River. Salt River empties into the Ohio River at West Point, Kentucky.



## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK COUNTRY

true that considerable timber in this area has been cut and many homes and buildings have been erected, the people still travel pioneer trails and live much the same as did their forefathers. The landscape may be dotted here and there with telephone poles and wire fences, but the country remains quaint and picturesque, appearing much the same as it did in 1803, when the Lincoln family settled there six years before the president was born. Yet, hard by, this forgotten community, is located a great artery of travel, an army fort which barracks one of the most highly developed mechanized cavalry units in the world and an impregnable vault containing billions in United States gold.<sup>5</sup>

Mill Creek has escaped the notice of most Lincoln historians and biographers. Possibly one reason for their failure to mention this historic area in their published works was due to its remote location. Then too, many students engaged in historical research have been content with a few

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<sup>5</sup> Fort Henry Knox (highway U. S. 31W) is located in northern Hardin County, fourteen miles north of Elizabethtown. This is one of the most important army posts in the nation. The new steel and concrete vault, constructed to protect \$6,000,000,000 of the nation's gold, is located at this army post. The nation's wealth is guarded by several companies of mechanized cavalry—likely the most efficient fighting force in the world. Elizabethtown Rotary Club: *Elizabethtown-Hardin County, Kentucky, 1937* (folder).

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

findings gleaned from the Hardin County Court records. Others were prone to dismiss the subject altogether because Thomas Lincoln's activities and transactions on Mill Creek have a tendency to build up one's respect for the president's father. Early biographers were attempting to place Lincoln's father in a different light. They hoped to contrast abjection with achievement, dullness with intelligence and failure with fame. Some authors have confused the Lincoln Mill Creek land with one of the three residences which were later acquired by Thomas Lincoln in Kentucky.<sup>6</sup> As the Lincolns' residence on Mill Creek

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<sup>6</sup> "Lamon assumed that this (Mill Creek farm) was the Knob Creek farm, and so did Herndon. Other authors assumed that this was the Nolin farm, and that Thomas Lincoln had been improving it for three years before his marriage, and that during his residence, with Nancy, in Elizabethtown, he was building the house where Abraham was to be born." Barton, William E.: *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Copyright 1925. Volume I, note, page 75. Used by special permission of the publishers.

Evidently Ida M. Tarbell was confused in regard to the Mill Creek farm when she wrote her biography *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*. She made the following statement: "It was at Elizabethtown that the first child of the Lincolns, a daughter, was born. Soon after this event Thomas Lincoln decided to combine farming with his trade, and moved to the farm he had bought in 1803 (year of purchase of Mill Creek farm) on the Big South Fork of Nolin Creek in Hardin County, now LaRue County three miles from Hodgenville, and about fourteen miles from Elizabethtown." Tarbell, Ida M.: *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*. McClure, Phillips & Co.,

## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK COUNTRY

played no significant part in the biographers' meager discussions of Abraham Lincoln's Kentucky years, few have given to the public any information concerning this historically important territory in northern Hardin County. If the early Lincoln biographers had visited the Mill Creek country at an early date, and reported accurately the result of their research, they would have been able to clear up, for the present day historian, many complexing problems.<sup>7</sup>

This area abounds in Lincoln lore and the accounts of the pioneer family on Mill Creek are both factual and legendary.<sup>8</sup> Such a voluminous

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Copyright 1895. Vol. I, pages 13-14.

Thomas Lincoln purchased the South Fork of Nolin River farm (Lincoln's birthplace) on December 12, 1808. Equity Bundle 24, Hardin Circuit Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Warren, Louis A.: *Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood*. D. Appleton-Century Co. Copyright 1926. Page 54.

Dr. William E. Barton was undoubtedly the first Lincoln biographer who discovered that there was no connection between the Mill Creek farm and the later residences of Lincoln's father. Barton, William E.: *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. I, note, page 75.

<sup>7</sup> Undoubtedly, accurate information concerning the pioneer Lincolns could have been obtained in detail from residents on Mill Creek as late as 1875 or 1880.

<sup>8</sup> "The Sixth Magisterial District of Hardin County (Mill Creek Community) . . . . ., now contains more living descendants of Abraham Lincoln, the first (Captain Abraham Lincoln), than likely any state." Affidavit of G. E. McMurtry (Grandson of Samuel Haycraft, Jr., Author of *The History of Elizabethtown, Kentucky*—[1869]) February



## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

amount of data has been gathered, concerning the Mill Creek Lincolns, one must carefully weigh and sift all evidence to harmonize the subject with accepted Lincolniana.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, these legendary recitals can not be wholly discarded and rejected. At this late date such traditions must be accepted, in part, if the Lincoln Mill Creek country is to take its rightful place in a discussion of the Kentucky homes of the Lincolns. The outstanding points of interest, in this section of northern Hardin County, are the following:

Thomas Lincoln's Farm on Mill Creek  
The Lincoln Mill Creek Trail and  
the Douglas Spring  
The William Brumfield Home  
The Lincoln Mill Creek Cemetery

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8, 1930. Files of the Lincoln Memorial Highway Commission of Kentucky.

"When ten years of age, I saw inside of my first schoolhouse, in the north end of the 6th Magistrate's District in Hardin County. Fully one-half of the pupils attending that school were either grandchildren or great-grandchildren of Nancy Lincoln Brumfield and our former neighbors on the south; one southeast, and one on the east side, had married granddaughters of Nancy Brumfield." McMurry, G. E.: "More Lincoln facts are told," *The Elizabethtown News*, February 18, 1931.

<sup>9</sup> In this community it is erroneously alleged by many residents that Thomas Lincoln and family lived in a commodious two-story log house, and that Abraham Lincoln was born on the Mill Creek farm. Mill Creek is considered as one of a dozen or more mythical birthplaces of the Sixteenth President.

## THOMAS LINCOLN'S FARM ON MILL CREEK

THE urge of a pioneer farmer caused Thomas Lincoln to purchase land, and his first homestead was located on the waters of Mill Creek.<sup>10</sup> This tract is located between the Shepherdsville road and the Dixie Highway, some seven miles from Elizabethtown. Why he selected this portion of Hardin County for the homestead of the

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<sup>10</sup> The Mill Creek farm is referred to as the first farm of Thomas Lincoln because the land was well improved, and here, for the first time, he could call his home his own. Thomas Lincoln was a land owner before he purchased the Mill Creek farm in 1803. On September 5, 1798 (it is believed he was in Tennessee with his Uncle Isaac a part of this year), Thomas Lincoln entered a land grant of 100 acres in the records of the Green County court as follows: "Warrant No. 1044—We do hereby certify that Thomas Lincoln is entitled to 100 acres of second rate land by virtue of his having improved the same agreeably to an act of the Assembly entitled 'An act for encouraging & granting relief to settlers', & located as follows: On the waters of Mathis Creek & on Wm. McCorgans east line & 24 poles from said McCorgans east corner at an elm, hickory & loopwood tree, running thence N. 30 W. 126 poles, N. 60 E. 126½ poles, thence at right angles for quantity the improvements is in the beginning." Land Grant No. 1044—Files Green County Court, Greensburg, Kentucky.

In May 1801, it is believed, Thomas Lincoln entered 200

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

Lincolns will likely always remain a matter of speculation.<sup>11</sup> Before making this purchase his home was in Washington County, although he had been living in Elizabethtown for spasmodic periods, since the year of 1796.<sup>12</sup> Sometime between September 6, 1802, and April 3, 1803, the Lincoln family migrated to Hardin County.<sup>13</sup> After the

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acres of land in Cumberland County, Kentucky. Additional discoveries have revealed that Thomas Lincoln was granted ninety-eight acres of land in Cumberland County, at the August term of court in 1804. Historians are not positive whether or not this Thomas Lincoln was the father of the President. *Lincoln Lore*, "Thomas Lincoln Chronology" No. 44. February 10, 1930. Barton, William E.: *The Lineage of Lincoln*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Copyright 1929. Pages 283-284. *The Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society*, May 1925, Vol. 23, No. 68, pages 205-206.

<sup>11</sup> The Mill Creek Lincoln farm was located on a pioneer trail leading to the Bullit Salt Licks, where the first salt works in Kentucky was established. This pioneer salt works was located about three miles from Shepherdsville and the traffic over the Salt Lick trail, from Shepherdsville to Elizabethtown caused this portion of northern Hardin County to become an active enterprising community in that early day. Undoubtedly, this area was one of the most attractive farming communities in Hardin County during Thomas Lincoln's residence in Kentucky.

<sup>12</sup> On July 13, 1796, Thomas Lincoln received \$9.56 from Samuel Haycraft, Senior, at Elizabethtown, Kentucky. This money was received for work done on a mill and mill race in the village. *Lincoln Lore* "Thomas Lincoln Chronology" No. 44, February 10, 1930. Warren, Louis A.: *Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood*, page 40.

<sup>13</sup> Warren, Louis A.: "Mill Creek Home." Unpublished manuscript. Files of the Lincoln National Life Foundation,



## THOMAS LINCOLN'S FARM ON MILL CREEK

massacre of Captain Abraham Lincoln, the grandfather of the president, in Jefferson County in the year 1786, the family settled in Washington County.<sup>14</sup> Hardin County was to be the third and last Kentucky County in which the Lincolns were to find a home.

The Lincoln migration, from Washington County to the Mill Creek farm, included the widow Bathsheba Lincoln, the wife of the pioneer Abraham Lincoln, her youngest son, Thomas and her youngest daughter, Nancy Ann.<sup>15</sup> Nancy had married William Brumfield, on February 3, 1801, while residing in Washington County, and her husband also accompanied the Lincolns on their

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Fort Wayne, Indiana. Also Kentucky State Historical Society, Washington County Section Tax Books 1802, 1803.

<sup>14</sup> The Lincoln family settled on Beech Fork, then in Nelson County, now Washington County. Washington County was formed in 1792 out of a part of the county of Nelson. Collins: *History of Kentucky*, Vol. II, "Washington County," page 784.

*The Filson Club History Quarterly*, Louisville, Kentucky, Vol. 11 (Eleven), No. 3, July, 1937, "The Filson Club in the 1937 Lincoln Pilgrimage," a reprint of the Club's sixteen page illustrated brochure: "Pilgrimage Conducted June 20-23, 1937, by Louis A. Warren, Including the Meeting at Long Run Baptist Church, Jefferson County, Kentucky, Near the Site of the Home of Pioneer Abraham Lincoln, Sponsored by The Filson Club June 25, 1937," by R. C. Ballard Thruston, with a one-page history of The Long Run Baptist Church, by Thomas C. Fisher. (See notes 108 and 111.)

<sup>15</sup> "In the few legal documents and tax lists that we have bearing her (grandmother of the President) name, the forms

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

move to Hardin County.<sup>16</sup> The other Lincoln children had been widely scattered by marriages.<sup>17</sup> The cabin home on the Mill Creek Lincoln land was likely of ample proportions to accommodate this kindred group.<sup>18</sup>

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include Barbara, Bersheba and other less obvious variants. We have two of her own signatures, and they are no more consistent than those of William Shakespeare.” Barton, William E.: *The Women Lincoln Loved*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Copyright 1927. Page 52. Used by special permission of the publishers.

The residents of the Mill Creek country all refer to Lincoln’s grandmother as “Bersheba,” while it is admitted that the spelling of her name varies, it is the author’s opinion that the correct name is “Bathsheba.” The Kentucky Marriage Document (note 16) bears the name “Bersheba.” Undoubtedly she was generally known to Kentuckians as “Bersheba.”

There is a possibility that Mary Lincoln Crume and her husband, Ralph Crume, whom she married August 5, 1801, accompanied the Lincolns to Mill Creek. The Crumes eventually settled in Breckinridge County, Kentucky.

“The eldest sister, Mary, married Ralph Crume, and some of her descendants are now known to be in Breckenridge County, Kentucky. The second sister, Nancy, married William Brumfield, and her family are not known to have left Kentucky.” Short Autobiography Written At The Request Of A Friend To Use In Preparing A Popular Campaign Biography In The Election Of 1860—June (1 ? ) 1860. Nicolay and Hay: *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Volume VI, 25.

<sup>16</sup> In the marriage bonds and permits for the year 1801, of the Washington County Court, the following permit has been discovered, regarding the Brumfield marriage: “Sir, you will please to give a license for William Brumfield to marry (Nancy) Ann Lincoln, my daughter, given under my hand



## THOMAS LINCOLN'S FARM ON MILL CREEK

Thomas Lincoln's Hardin County farm was situated near a pioneer church and graveyard. This house of worship was located in close proximity to the Lincoln land at the extreme northern corner of his boundary line. Undoubtedly, the church served this community and was attended by the Lincoln family.<sup>19</sup> A portion of the abandoned

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this 3rd day of February 1801, Bersheba Lincoln." Warren, Louis A.: *Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood*. D. Appleton-Century Co., Copyright 1926. Page 15. Used by special permission of the publishers.

<sup>17</sup> "The year 1801 marked the breaking up of the Lincoln (Washington County) home. A series of three weddings was responsible for the scattering of the children that Bersheba had kept together all these years." *Ibid.* Page 14.

<sup>18</sup> A study of the Lincoln Mill Creek cabin site indicates that this early pioneer home was a double cabin, all under one roof, with a "dog walk" through the center. The foundation stones of both original chimneys are still in existence and the measurements taken on the site indicate that the original dimensions of the Lincoln cabin were about twenty-five feet wide and forty-five feet long. The cabin was so situated that one chimney faced north and the other south. The front of the double cabin faced east. There is no indication that the cabin was of two story proportions, however, there is every reason to believe that there was a small loft over the structure. This evidence would lead one to believe that this cabin was larger than those usually associated with the Lincoln family in Kentucky.

<sup>19</sup> Mrs. Elizabeth Melton Nall stated that the old church building was about ready to fall when she first remembered the place. She recalled that a few services were held in the home of Mrs. ( — ) Melton after the church was too far gone to use, and that they sang "Approach My Soul to the Mercy Seat." She was able to remember the names of the following

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

pioneer graveyard yet remains, but not a vestige of the church can be discerned.<sup>20</sup> The location of this church, near the Lincoln home, likely added to the attractiveness of the Mill Creek farm. Perhaps the pioneer church and the Lincoln home were the very center of community life in this vicinity.

Many are of the opinion that Bathsheba Lincoln was the second wife of Captain Abraham Lincoln (1744–1786).<sup>21</sup> Those of his descendants have insisted that the first wife of the Revolutionary War captain was named Mary.<sup>22</sup> Documentary records reveal that Bathsheba was married to Abraham Lincoln as early as 1780.<sup>23</sup> Some

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Mill Creek residents who were interred in this cemetery over sixty years ago: Walter Mudd and Linnie, his wife, Priscilla Gilmore, Thomas Williams and Rebecca, his wife, William Scott and wife, Sidney Williams and wife, and William Maples and wife. Interview of Dr. Louis A. Warren with Mrs. Elizabeth Melton Nall at her home on Mill Creek, Summer 1922.

<sup>20</sup> It has been suggested that Bathsheba Lincoln may be interred in this ancient graveyard. Such conclusions are not correct and ample evidence is available to prove her burial plot to be in the cemetery of the First Baptist Church of Mill Creek.

<sup>21</sup> *Lincoln Lore*, "Grandfather Lincoln Chronology," No. 171, July 18, 1932.

<sup>22</sup> *Lincoln Lore*, "Lincoln Genealogy," No. 37, December 23, 1929.

<sup>23</sup> "1780—February 18 (Captain Abraham Lincoln) Sells 250 acres of land in Rockingham County for which he re-

## THOMAS LINCOLN'S FARM ON MILL CREEK

say that she was a daughter of Leonard Herring.<sup>24</sup> Washington County Court records have revealed that Bathsheba Lincoln was a widow as late as the year 1801, and that she was the maternal parent of Nancy Ann Lincoln.<sup>25</sup> It has been suggested that the four older Lincoln children, namely, Mordecai, Josiah, Thomas and Mary were the progeny of Captain Abraham Lincoln's supposed first wife, Mary. Marriage records in Augusta

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ceived 5,000 pounds current money of Virginia. His wife, Bersheba, signed deed with him." *Lincoln Lore* "Grandfather Lincoln Chronology." No. 171, July 18, 1932. In this relinquishment she signed her name "Batsab Lincoln."

<sup>24</sup> "We are positive that the first name of Abraham Lincoln's wife in 1780 and the widow he left in 1786 was Bersheba but there is no record which gives her family name. Whether or not she is the woman whom Abraham Lincoln married in 1770 and the mother of all his children is problematical. The earliest family traditions claim Bersheba was the daughter of Leonard Herring but as Leonard Herring was not married until August 1761, Bersheba could not have been more than eight years old when Abraham Lincoln was married in 1770. She may have become Lincoln's second wife some time before 1780. A recent publication of Herring Chrisman shifts the parentage of Bersheba to Alexander Herring, father of Leonard, but she is not named in his will nor in the proceedings which followed in the settlement of the estate. We do not have positive evidence that Thomas Lincoln's own mother's name was Bersheba and only traditional evidence that Bersheba's maiden name was Herring." *Lincoln Lore*, "Grandparents of Abraham Lincoln," No. 168, June 27, 1932.

<sup>25</sup> Marriage Bonds and Permits for 1801. Washington County Court, Springfield, Kentucky. Warren, Louis A.: *Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood*, page 15.



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County, Virginia, disclose that Captain Lincoln was married June 9, 1770, but the bride's name is not mentioned in the documents. Influential historians have suggested, as a result of historical research, that between January, 1776, the date of Thomas Lincoln's birth, and the year 1779, there is a likelihood that the pioneer Lincoln's first wife died and that he married again. His second marriage, it has been asserted, was to Bathsheba Herring.<sup>26</sup> If this assertion is true, then Bathsheba Lincoln will undoubtedly rank along with Sarah Bush Johnston, Abraham Lincoln's step-mother, as one of the faithful foster mothers of history.

Legendary tradition and factual research, in the Lincoln Mill Creek country, aver that a blood relationship must have existed between Bathsheba and all of the Lincoln children. She was a faithful wife and mother. She kept her orphan children together under one roof until they reached maturity. As a result of her motherly care and because of the devotion of the Lincoln children for her welfare, it has appeared to the average lay-

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<sup>26</sup> William E. Barton was convinced that Captain Lincoln was married only once. He made the following statement: "From all these facts we now know that Abraham Lincoln, the pioneer, had but one wife, Bathsheba. She was probably the daughter of Leonard Herring, of Bridgewater, Virginia." Barton, William E.: *The Lineage of Lincoln*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., page 74. Used by special permission of the publishers.

## THOMAS LINCOLN'S FARM ON MILL CREEK

man, not acquainted with historical research, that Bathsheba was the maternal parent of Thomas Lincoln. Regardless of future historical discoveries, the fact remains that Bathsheba was the wife of Captain Lincoln, and that Thomas Lincoln considered her a devoted mother.<sup>27</sup>

Washington County records verify those of Hardin County in regard to this family migration. Thomas Lincoln's name does not appear on the Washington County commissioner's tax book for the year 1803, but there is a note inserted under his name, on a delinquent list, which states that he has "gone to Hardin."<sup>28</sup> The Hardin County tax list of 1803 contains his name. During this

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<sup>27</sup> "Bathsheba Lincoln lived through strange adventures. She spent her youth and early married life in Virginia, and we know that in the latter part of her residence there she was not in good health. She endured the hard journey over the Wilderness Road and the perils and privations of life in a new country. She wept above the body of her murdered husband, and was destined thereafter to waken in the night and shudder lest some unwonted noise should indicate the approach of savages. She brought up her five children amid serious difficulties. She lived to see them all married and scattered and herself to be a great-grandmother." Barton, William E.: *The Lineage of Lincoln*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Copyright 1929. Page 74. Used by special permission of the publishers.

Barton in his book *The Women Lincoln Loved*, devoted a chapter to the discussion of Bathsheba Lincoln. Pages 51-59.

<sup>28</sup> Insolvent List, Baalom Jones District 1803, Washington County Court, Springfield, Kentucky. Warren, Louis A.: *Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood*, page 47.

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

year, he is for the first time taxed for a tract of land, consisting of 200 (238) acres on Mill Creek.<sup>29</sup> Thomas Lincoln purchased his Mill Creek farm on September 2, 1803.<sup>30</sup> The purchase price amounted to one hundred and eighteen English pounds, or a sum now equivalent to \$574.07.<sup>31</sup> The consideration was in "hand paid." Due to some unaccountable reason, Thomas Lincoln did not receive the deed of possession from Dr. John F. Stater, the owner of the property, until November 26, 1803.<sup>32</sup> It is believed, however, that he occupied the land previous to the actual transfer.<sup>33</sup> The Mill Creek deed from Stater to Lincoln is recorded as follows:

### STATER TO LINCOLN

This indenture made this 2nd day of September one thousand eight hundred and three, between Dr. John F.

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<sup>29</sup> Tax Book, 1803, Hardin County Section, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky. McMurry, R. Gerald: *A Series of Monographs Concerning the Lincolns and Hardin County, Kentucky*. The Enterprise Press. Page 11.

<sup>30</sup> Deed Book B. 253 (Stater to Lincoln) Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

<sup>31</sup> *Lincoln Lore*, "Thomas Lincoln Chronology," No. 44, February 10, 1930.

<sup>32</sup> Deed Book B. 253 (Stater to Lincoln-Marginal Note) Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

<sup>33</sup> Warren, Louis A.: "Mill Creek Home." Unpublished manuscript. Files of Lincoln National Life Foundation, Fort Wayne, Indiana.







Artists drawing of Thomas Lincoln's Home on Mill Creek.



Dogwood, White Oak and Gum Corner to Thomas William's Original Line



Plat of  
 Thomas Lincoln's  
 Mill Creek Farm  
 HARDIN COUNTY, KENTUCKY



## THOMAS LINCOLN'S FARM ON MILL CREEK

Stater of Green County and State of Kentucky, of the one part and Thomas Lincoln of Hardin County, state aforesaid of the other part *Witnesseth*: That for and in consideration of the sum of one hundred and eighteen pounds in hand paid, the receipt of which before signing and sealing of these presents, he the said Dr. John F. Stater doth hereby acknowledge having bargained and sold and by these presents doth grant, bargain and sell unto the said Thomas Lincoln a certain tract or parcel of land containing two hundred and thirty-eight acres, part of the 1600 acre survey patented to William May, bought by said Stater of Joseph Fenwick and bounded as follows: to wit; Beginning at a hickory corner to Robert Huston survey, part of said 1600 acre survey, thence South thirty degrees west one hundred and eighty-three poles to a stake corner to Huston, thence North forty five degrees West one hundred and fifty-five poles to a black oak corner to the original survey North twenty four degrees West one hundred and forty poles to a white oak in Shepherds line corner to the original, thence North thirty one degrees West fifty poles to a dog-wood white oak and gum corner to Thomas Williams in the original line, thence with Williams line South sixty seven East two hundred and fifty poles to a white oak and hickory South 31 degrees West twenty poles to the beginning. . . .

To have and to hold the above mentioned two hundred and thirty eight acres of land with all its appurtenances barns, stable, ways, houses, water and conveniences, to the above mentioned Thomas Lincoln his heirs executors and administrators forever against him, the said Dr. John F. Stater, his heirs executors or ad-

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ministrators forever, and he the said Dr. John F. Stater as well for his heirs as for himself doth further covenant and agree to and with the said Thomas Lincoln and his heirs that he will warrant and forever defend the above mentioned two hundred and thirty eight acres of land with all of its appurtenances to the said Thomas Lincoln his heirs, executors and administrators forever to their proper use and behalf, against him the said Dr. John F. Stater and his heirs, executors, etc., forever, but not against the claim or claims of any person or persons whatever, but-be it plainly understood should said land be taken by any prior or legal claim, then the above bound Dr. John F. Stater his heirs executors are to pay to the said Thomas Lincoln his heirs, executors, etc., the above mentioned sum of one hundred and eighteen pounds. In witness of the above bound Dr. John F. Stater doth hereunto set his hand and affix his seal the day and date above written.

John F. Stater (Seal)

Marginal note:

Delivered to Thomas Lincoln April 23, 1814.  
Hardin County;

Sct. s.s.

I hereby certify that on the second day of September last this indenture . . . from John F. Stater to Thomas Lincoln was acknowledged by the said Stater to be his act and deed and the same was admitted to record on this 26th day of November 1803.

Benjamin Helm, H.C.C.

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The deed from Stater to Lincoln is of interest because of the numerous improvements listed in the conveyance. Mention is made of "barns, stable, ways, houses, water and conveniences." Evidently, the Mill Creek home was not just another hut in the wilderness. On this land there were buildings, other than the dwelling for the convenience of the owner or tenant who might reside there. Undoubtedly, the Lincoln family found their Mill Creek home comfortable and suitable for pioneer needs. Surely, an orchard was planted on this farm, which would amply supply the Lincolns with fruit, and the soil is believed to have been productive. This farm was not an unsettled, wild tract of poor land. This property, before Lincoln purchased it, had belonged to an apparently influential citizen, Dr. John F. Stater of Green County, who probably was responsible for the many improvements recorded in the Stater-Lincoln deed.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Little information is available concerning Dr. John F. Stater of Green County, Kentucky. A thorough search through the files of the Green County court has produced no documentary evidence concerning this pioneer resident. Court records of Hardin County reveal the fact that he (John Stater) served on a jury with Thomas Lincoln in the case of the commonwealth (p) vs. John Walters (d), on Monday, April 25, 1808, Order Book C, 119, Hardin Circuit Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

The name, Stater, has often been spelled Slater; however,



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The contemptuous attitude of early Lincoln biographers made it impossible for them to admit that Thomas Lincoln ever had enough money to purchase a farm for cash. Upon their discovery, in the files of the Hardin County Court, of an official court document affirming the sale, they averred that Thomas Lincoln merely pretended to make the purchase. Some biographers have claimed that he bought the place on credit, others said that he never met the payments for the farm and one author has stated that he probably permitted a portion of the farm to be sold for taxes.<sup>35</sup>

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it is believed that Stater is correct. On the other hand, Dr. John F. Stater has been referred to as John Tom Stater. There is a remote possibility that Dr. John F. Stater was the father of John Tom Stater, however, it is likely that both names refer to the same individual.

Dr. William E. Barton, in his *Paternity of Abraham Lincoln* was of the opinion that the name, Slater, was correct. Barton, William E.: *The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Copyright by George H. Doran Co. 1920. Page 353.

<sup>35</sup> Evidently Lamon, depending upon Herndon's manuscripts, confused the Mill Creek farm with the Knob Creek farm. Lamon made the following statement: "The land he now lived upon (two hundred and thirty eight acres) he had pretended to buy from a Mr. Slater. The deed mentions a consideration of one hundred and eighteen pounds. The purchase must have been a mere speculation, with all payments deferred, for the title remained in Lincoln but a single year. The deed was made to him, September 2, 1813; and October 27, 1814, he conveyed two hundred acres to Charles Milton for two hundred pounds, leaving thirty eight acres of the

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However, the original deed from Stater to Lincoln states that the sum was "in hand paid, and the receipt. . . . . acknowledge (d)." <sup>36</sup>

The early school of biographers were skeptical of Thomas Lincoln's ability to acquire money. Where, they asked, could he have secured the purchase price? How could he have obtained one hundred and eighteen pounds with which to buy a farm of 238 acres? <sup>37</sup> It is, of course, a matter of speculation to determine the immediate source of Lincoln's purchase money. Undoubtedly, he must have been able to accumulate a considerable sum of money as a result of his labors, prior to the year 1803. By 1803, he was twenty-seven years old, able-bodied, unmarried and of normal ability.

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tract unsold. No public record discloses what he did with the remainder. If he retained any interest in it for the time, it was probably permitted to be sold for taxes. The last of his voluntary transactions, in regard to this land, took place two years before his removal to Indiana; after which, he seems to have continued in possession as the tenant of Milton." Lamon, Ward H.: *Life of Lincoln*, page 15.

<sup>36</sup> It is possible that the equivalent of one hundred and eighteen English pound sterling was paid by Thomas Lincoln in the form of chattel property for his Mill Creek farm. However, recorded evidence indicates a cash payment.

<sup>37</sup> "He (Thomas Lincoln) was placed in possession of several tracts of land at different times in his life, but was never able to pay for a single one of them." Herndon, William H.: *Herndon's Lincoln, The True Story of A Great Life*, Volume I, page 12.

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He is known to have worked for Samuel Haycraft, Senior, as early as the year 1796, and during the year 1797 his labors, according to Haycraft's account book, proved remunerative enough to net him a sum of approximately \$150.00.<sup>38</sup> He was a carpenter and cabinet maker, and the fruits of his labor, undoubtedly, accrued in the form of money. A portion of the purchase price may have been obtained from the estate of Captain Abraham Lincoln. It is now believed that Mordecai Lincoln, who inherited the bulk of the estate by the law of primogeniture, divided his inheritance with his mother, brothers and sisters.<sup>39</sup> Suppos-

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<sup>38</sup> "When Thomas Lincoln was twenty-one years of age, he went to work for Samuel Haycraft, at Elizabethtown, who was constructing a mill. This was in 1797 and his wages entered on the Haycraft account book to Thomas Lincoln's credit amounted to \$140.80." Documentary files, Lincoln National Life Foundation, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Warren, Louis A.: "Three generations of Kentucky Lincolns." *The Filson Club History Quarterly*. April 1938, No. 2, Vol. 12, page 76.

<sup>39</sup> "It cannot be found that he ever received anything from his father's estate, although it is possible Mordecai may have given him something from the sale of one of his father's farms." Lockridge, Ross F.: *A. Lincoln*. World Book Company. Copyright 1930. Page 12. Used by special permission of the publishers.

"On September 2, 1803, with money given him by Mordecai as Thomas's share of the proceeds of a sale of land inherited from the father, he bought of John T. Slater for £118 two hundred and thirty-eight acres of land in Hardin County, about eight miles north of the prosperous and thriving village



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ing, however, that Thomas Lincoln did not pay for the farm, cash in hand, or that he did not live upon the land and till the soil, as some have charged, is that a serious charge to be trumped up against the father of the president? <sup>40</sup> Lincoln historians who labor under the impression that Thomas Lincoln never had any money in his possession suffer a sad delusion.

Thomas Lincoln resided permanently on this Mill Creek farm with his family for about three years, or until his marriage to Nancy Hanks. Proof of this residence is shown by the fact that his name appears on many Hardin County Court documents, during this interval of three years. While residing on his Mill Creek farm, Thomas worked occasionally in Elizabethtown, being employed principally by the County Court of Hardin.<sup>41</sup> The Lincoln Mill Creek home was lo-

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of Elizabethtown." Beveridge, Albert J.: *Abraham Lincoln 1809-1858*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Copyright 1928. Vol. I., page 12. Used by special permission of the publishers. Barton, William E.: *The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln*, page 266.

<sup>40</sup> "It does not appear that Thomas ever tilled his soil, or, indeed that he even lived upon his farm." Beveridge, Albert J.: *Abraham Lincoln 1809-1858*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Copyright 1928. Vol. I, pages 12-13. Used by special permission of the publishers.

<sup>41</sup> "He remained in Hardin County, however, probably in Elizabethtown, for he served on juries four times, and guarded prisoners three times in 1803-04." Hardin County Order

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cated some seven miles distant from Elizabethtown, the county seat, and it is reasonable to suppose that he visited the community on numerous occasions.<sup>42</sup>

When Thomas Lincoln married Nancy Hanks, June 12, 1806, in Washington County, he immediately returned to Hardin County with his bride. The young married couple intended to make Elizabethtown their home, but there is some question whether or not Thomas Lincoln had built an Elizabethtown cabin home at this time. Very likely, he took his bride to Mill Creek to reside until he could complete a cabin.<sup>43</sup> After a cabin had been erected in the village, the young couple started housekeeping at the county seat. Eliza-

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Book. 1803-04. Beveridge, Albert J.: *Abraham Lincoln 1809-1858*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Copyright 1928. Page 13. Used by special permission of the publishers.

<sup>42</sup> By the old pioneer road, the Lincoln Mill Creek farm was located about seven miles from Elizabethtown. A new grade and drain road that is being constructed through this area will shorten the distance one mile. Questionnaire: G. E. McMurtry of Vine Grove, Kentucky, to author—March 23, 1938.

<sup>43</sup> "It is probable that soon after the wedding Thomas Lincoln brought his bride to the Mill Creek farm where his mother lived. But they did not stay there long, for within the year he built a cabin on a lot which he owned in Elizabethtown, or E-town as it was generally called, when they began keeping house." Lockridge, Ross F.: *A. Lincoln*. World Book Company, Copyright 1930. Page 13. Used by special permission of the publishers.





*Photograph courtesy of Lincoln National Life Foundation of Fort Wayne, Indiana.*

### LINCOLN CABIN SITE ON MILL CREEK

This house was erected upon a part of the foundation of the Thomas Lincoln Mill Creek cabin. Some of the yellow poplar lumber salvaged from the Lincoln cabin, including the stairway, washboards, sills and wooden pegs, as well as the chimney foundation stones, were used in the construction of this residence. In November 1927, this home burned, and a third dwelling has been erected upon the original cabin site.





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bethtown, in the year 1806, was a small frontier community; attractive because of its cordial, democratic, diversified society, with its smatterings of colonial culture. Here were to be found skilled circuit-riding lawyers, pioneer preachers, doctors, and the village even boasted of a dancing master, who wore knee breeches. Here, in the court house, were held great forensic duels. Pioneer preachers harangued Hardin County citizens in their camp meetings. Balls, dances and traveling circuses entertained the inhabitants from time to time. This lively village was the only center of population in which Thomas Lincoln ever lived, and, until the Lincolns moved to Indiana, it was the only town of metropolitan proportion that Abraham Lincoln had ever seen.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> The third census credited the village, in the year 1810, with only one hundred and eighty inhabitants. Little, Lucius P.: *Ben Hardin, His Times and Contemporaries*, page 31.

Stephenson in his work entitled "Lincoln" made the following statement in regard to Elizabethtown: "In central Kentucky, a poor new village was Elizabethtown, unkempt, chokingly dusty in the dry weather, with muddy streams instead of streets during the rains, a stench of pig-sties at the back of its cabins, but everywhere looking outward glimpses of a lovely meadow land." Stephenson, Nathaniel Wright: *Lincoln*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Copyright 1922. Page 3. Used by special permission of the publishers.

Ida M. Tarbell is of the opinion that Elizabethtown was not an unattractive village in Lincoln's day. She made the following statement in a letter to the author in the year 1932: "I am tired of hearing the place (Elizabethtown) described

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Upon the removal of Thomas Lincoln to Elizabethtown, he appears to have lost interest in his Mill Creek property. Likely, he had purchased the property as an investment and to provide a home for his widowed mother.<sup>45</sup> Also while living in Elizabethtown he did not have to be concerned with his Mill Creek property because it is believed that he had leased this land to his brother-in-law, William Brumfield. Records reveal that he paid taxes on this farm, in 1803, the year of the purchase. However, he did not list it again, until the year 1809.<sup>46</sup> From then on, the farm is listed for taxes every year until 1815. Evidently, during the period of five years, from 1803 to 1809, William Brumfield, the leaseholder, took care of this obligation.<sup>47</sup>

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as a mud-hole and nothing more!" Ida M. Tarbell in letter to author. December 10, 1932.

<sup>45</sup> "This was probably the reason why Thomas Lincoln invested his patrimony in a farm on Mill Creek." Barton, William E.: *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Copyright 1925. Vol. I, page 12. Used by special permission of the publishers.

<sup>46</sup> Hardin County Commissioner's Tax Books. Hardin County Section 1803-1809. Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky.

McMurtry, R. Gerald: *A Series of Monographs Concerning The Lincolns and Hardin County, Kentucky*, page 11.

<sup>47</sup> "It is likely that during these five years during which it (Mill Creek Farm) was not listed it had been leased to William Brumfield, Lincoln's brother-in-law, who took care of



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We can reasonably assume that Thomas Lincoln, while residing in Elizabethtown, visited his widowed mother at her home on Mill Creek, accompanied by his wife, Nancy, and their infant daughter, Sarah. After moving to their South Fork of Nolin River farm, then to the Knob Creek farm, it would seem most probable that Thomas Lincoln with his wife and daughter and small son, Abraham, would pay frequent visits to Elizabethtown, their former home. At times, no doubt, they traveled as far as Mill Creek to visit the children's grandmother, Bathsheba Lincoln.<sup>48</sup> Pioneer Kentuckians were fond of visiting and it would have been an extraordinary condition, indeed, if Thomas Lincoln and his family had not

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the taxes." Warren, Louis A.: *Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood*. D. Appleton-Century Co., Copyright 1926. Page 115. Used by special permission of the publishers.

<sup>48</sup>"Did Abraham Lincoln ever see her (Bathsheba)? He spent the first seven years of his life in the same county where she was living with his father's youngest sister; it is scarcely possible that he did not see her. It was something of a ride, to be sure; for her home was in another part of the county than that in which Thomas and Nancy lived. But Thomas knew the way very well; there was where he had purchased his first Hardin County farm, the first farm he has hitherto been known to own, . . . Thomas knew the way, and there was every reason why he and Nancy should ride over now and then and visit his sister Nancy Brumfield and his aged mother." Barton, William E.: *The Women Lincoln Loved*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Copyright 1927. Page 56. Used by special permission of the publishers.

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visited their relatives who were residing in the same county. Here too, in the Mill Creek country were to be found Thomas Lincoln's close associates. In the Cedar Creek community located near the Brumfields and in the Vine Grove community were to be found friends and relatives of the Lincolns.<sup>49</sup>

On April 23, 1814, Thomas Lincoln contemplated the selling of his Mill Creek property, because on that day he called at the Hardin County Courthouse for the deed to his land, which had not been removed from the court files since his purchase of the farm, in 1803.<sup>50</sup> On October 27, 1814, he sold his property to Charles Melton. In

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<sup>49</sup> "It is important to note that nearly all of Lincoln's relatives and many of his friends at that time lived in and around Mill Creek. The Crutcher, Rogers, Haycraft, Maffitt, Cowley and Viers families lived in this community, while nearby, in the Vine Grove section which was adjacent to the Mill Creek community, there were to be found numerous Nall and Van Meter families; and also Lewis, Moorman, Daviess, Ray, Woolfolk, Ditto, Hynes, Corbett, Nevitt, Brown and Howell families, all of whom were, presumably, acquaintances of the Lincolns." McMurry, R. Gerald: "The Lincoln Migration from Kentucky to Indiana—1816." Reprinted from the *Indiana Magazine of History*. Vol. XXXIII, No. 4, December, 1937, page 19.

<sup>50</sup> Deed Book, B. 253 (Stater to Lincoln) Marginal Note: "Delivered to Thomas Lincoln April 23, 1814." Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

"The deed was signed and sealed, and left with the clerk of the court to be delivered, and it remained with him for

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closing this transaction, he signed the deed of conveyance by inscribing his signature, but his wife, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, made her mark, as she, apparently, was unable to write.<sup>51</sup> The deed of conveyance is as follows:

### THOMAS AND NANCY LINCOLN TO CHARLES MELTON

This indenture made this twenty seventh day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fourteen between Thomas Lincoln and Nancy his wife of the County of Hardin and the State of Kentucky, of the one part and Charles Melton of the county and state aforesaid of the other part, *witnesseth*;

That the said Thomas Lincoln and Nancy his wife, has this day granted, bargained and sold, and by these presents doth grant bargain and sell, alien and confirm unto the said Charles Melton a certain parcel or tract of land containing 200 acres of land for and in consideration of one hundred pounds to the said Lincoln and Nancy his wife and in hand paid by the said Melton the receipt whereof is acknowledged, which land was pat-

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nearly eleven years." Barton, William E.: *The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Copyright by George H. Doran Co. 1920. Page 351. Used by special permission of the publishers.

<sup>51</sup> Deed Book E. 193. Hardin County Court.

This was the only signature (mark) of Lincoln's mother known to exist, until the discovery in Spencer County, Indiana, of a copy of The Thomas Sparrow Will, bearing the name (mark) of Nancy Hanks Lincoln. *Lincoln Lore*: "The Thomas Sparrow Will." No. 383, August 10, 1936.



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ented in the name of William May and is conveyed from John Tom Stater to Thomas Lincoln of deed bearing the date the 2nd of September 1803, lying and being in Hardin County on the waters of Mill Creek and bounded as follows:

Beginning at a hickory corner to Robert Houston's survey, part of a sixteen hundred acre survey, thence south 30 degrees west 183 poles to a stake corner to Houston, thence north 45 degrees west 155 poles to a black oak, corner of the original survey, north 24 degrees west 140 poles to a white oak in Shepherd's line, corner to the original, thence 31 degrees west 60 poles to a dogwood white oak and gum corner to Thomas Williams in the original line, thence with Williams line south 67 east 250 poles to a white oak and hickory, south 31 degrees west 22 poles to the beginning, which courses contain 238 acres, and the said Melton is at liberty to take 200 acres out of the said 238 acres where he thinks proper and the said Lincoln and Nancy his wife does forever warrant and defend the said 200 acres of land from themselves and their heirs executors, administrators and assigns forever, to the said Melton, but not from the claim or claims of any other person. But if the said land should be lost by any better or prior claim then the said Lincoln is to pay the said Melton the sum of 100 pounds. In witness whereof the said Thomas Lincoln and Nancy his wife hath hereunto set their hands and affixed their seals the day and date before written. Interlined before signing.

Thomas Lincoln (Seal)

her

Nancy X Hanks

mark

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Hardin County Sct.

I Samuel Haycraft, Jr., Deputy Clerk of the county court for the county aforesaid, do hereby certify that on the day of the date hereof, Thomas Lincoln and Nancy his wife, personally appeared before me and acknowledged the within indenture or deed of bargain and sale to Charles Melton as and for their voluntary act and deed, she the said Nancy being at the same time examined by me separate and voluntarily relinquished her right of dower which she has or may have in and to the land hereby conveyed and that she was willing that the same should be recorded and that I have truly recorded the same this 27th day of October 1814.

SAMUEL HAYCRAFT, jr. D.C., H.C.C.

If Thomas Lincoln purchased the Mill Creek farm hoping to realize a profit on his investment, he was doomed to disappointment. He had retained his interest in the farm for a period of eleven years, from 1803 to 1814. Under normal conditions he might have been able to realize a handsome profit on his investment, but he, like many others, was always plagued with faulty land titles.<sup>52</sup> He had originally purchased from Dr. John F. Stater 238 acres. When he desired to sell his Mill Creek property and make investments in

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<sup>52</sup> Thomas Lincoln's removal to Indiana was partly on account of the disastrous experiences he had encountered in regard to land titles in Kentucky. Nicolay and Hay: *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. VI, page 26.



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other sections of Hardin County, he found a flaw in his deed. This, likely, accounts for the long period that he retained ownership of the Mill Creek farm. He, undoubtedly, realized that when the property was sold he would lose a portion of his land amounting to approximately thirty-eight acres. In making the deed, in 1814, Thomas and his wife guaranteed only 200 acres to be contained in the survey which actually did contain 238 acres. Under these conditions he sold his farm to Charles Melton, and his loss amounted to eighteen pounds.<sup>53</sup>

Lincoln's loss of thirty-eight acres of Mill Creek land, which amounted to one-seventh of his entire farm, was due to a mistake made either by the first surveyor or by Benjamin Helm, the Hardin County Court Clerk, who in 1803 copied the deed, Fenwick to Stater, while rewriting the deed, Stater to Lincoln.<sup>54</sup> The mistake in the Lincoln land

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<sup>53</sup> The purchase price amounted to a sum now equivalent to \$574.07. The selling price was a sum now equivalent to \$486.00. This would result in a loss of \$88.07, not including the profit that likely would have accrued during Thomas Lincoln's period of ownership. *Lincoln Lore*: "Thomas Lincoln Chronology" (See entries 1803 and 1814) No. 44, February 10, 1930.

<sup>54</sup> This land was originally patented to William May, and Stater purchased the tract of 238 acres from Joseph Fenwick. Deed Book B. 253, Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.



STATER TO LINCOLN  
1803

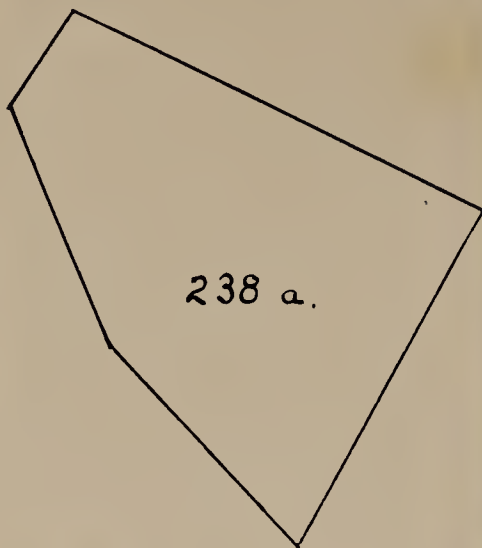


FIGURE I

LINCOLN TO MELTON  
1814

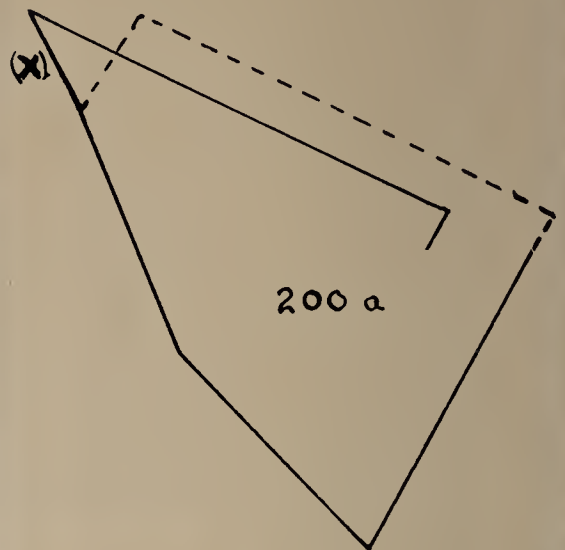


FIGURE II

FIRST DIVISION  
1823

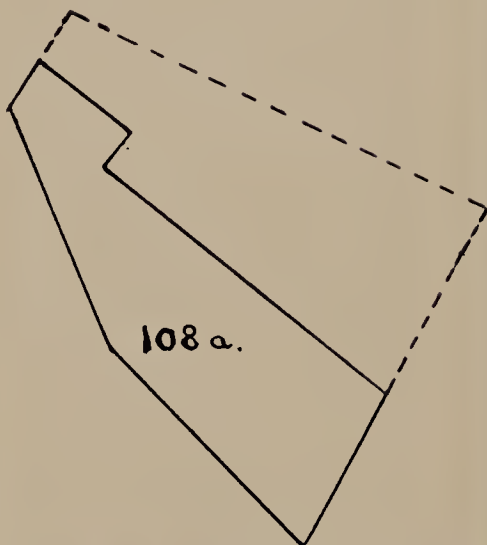


FIGURE III

DIVISIONS  
1903

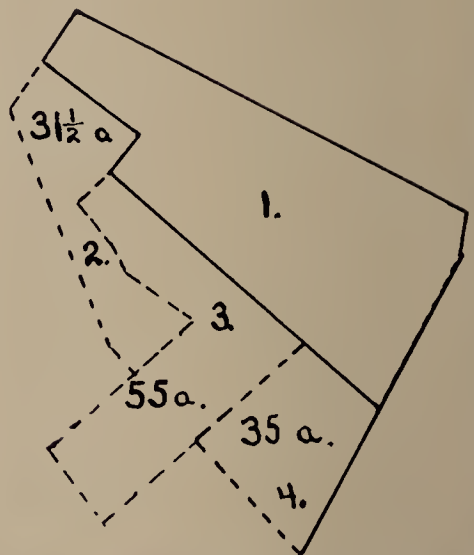


FIGURE IV

L.A.W.

*Plats drawn by Dr. Louis A. Warren, Director of the Lincoln National Life Foundation, Fort Wayne, Indiana.*

### LINCOLN-MILL CREEK FARM SURVEYS

Figure I. Original Lincoln boundary. Figure II. Heavy line shows calls of survey as copied in deed. (X) should have been east instead of west. Figure III. Melton 108 acre tract sold to Thomas W. Parrish. Figure IV. 1. Present Owner J. D. Nall. 2 and 3. Burr Eggen. 4. Harry Hobbs (1922).

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calls was first discovered by Dr. Louis A. Warren, who made a plat of the farm. In his comments regarding these calls, he said: 1134365

“When I attempted to make a plat of the farm I found that the next to the last line fell short by several poles, and would not close the survey. In reviewing the calls I discovered that if the call just before the one in question was made to read, north thirty-one degrees *east* sixty poles, instead of North thirty-one degree *west* sixty poles, the lines would meet and give approximately the correct acreage.

In the first actual survey of a portion of the farm in 1823 this line which caused the shortage was changed to read as I have suggested, but it is very doubtful if Thomas Lincoln who had moved to Indiana long before this, ever knew what became of one-seventh of his first purchase.”<sup>55</sup>

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It is to be noted that the calls of the Lincoln-Melton deed are identical with the calls of the Stater-Lincoln deed, except in two instances. The call, in question in the Stater-Lincoln deed, reads, *Thence north thirty-one degrees west fifty poles*, while the call in the Lincoln-Melton deed reads, *Thence (north) 31 degrees west 60 poles*. This change in the number of poles is difficult to explain. Perhaps a mistake was made in copying the deed, or the poles were increased from “fifty” to “60” by an inexperienced court clerk, in an unsuccessful attempt to close the survey and to relieve Thomas Lincoln of this technical predicament. The other difference is the last call of the Stater-Lincoln deed which reads south 31 degrees west twenty poles, while the Lincoln-Melton deed reads south 31 degrees west 22 poles.

<sup>55</sup> Warren, Louis A.: “Mill Creek Home.” Unpublished manuscript. Files of Lincoln National Life Foundation, Fort Wayne, Indiana.



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When Charles Melton purchased Thomas Lincoln's farm, in 1814, he was able to secure 38 acres of land in addition to the amount specified in his deed.<sup>56</sup> This was a most unfortunate transaction for Lincoln. Likely, all parties concerned realized that the transaction was in favor of Melton; however, Lincoln was willing to take the loss as he

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<sup>56</sup> The name, Melton, is often incorrectly referred to as Milton. The name, Melton, is well known in Hardin County, whereas Milton is little known.

Dr. Barton made the following statement in regard to Thomas Lincoln's thirty-eight acres on Mill Creek: "It will be noted in the above deed (Lincoln to Melton) that the thirty-eight acres was apparently abandoned. Probably Milton had another deed with the same boundaries calling for two hundred acres, and Thomas Lincoln's was virtually a quit claim. No attempt was made to draw any boundary line between the two hundred acres conveyed and the thirty-eight acres supposed to have been left over." Barton, William E.: *The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Copyright by George H. Doran Co. 1920. Page 351. Used by special permission of the publishers.

According to documentary evidence, Charles Melton was a soldier in the Revolutionary War. The following record has been discovered:

"Charles Melton Schedule. District of Kentucky, Hardin County—June Term 1820. On the 21st day of June 1820 personally appeared in open court of record for the said district, Charles Melton age 62 years, who first being sworn according to law doth on his oath declare that he served in the Revolutionary War as follows: inlisted in the year 1777 in London County, Va. . . . my family consists of myself and wife (Sibla) Sibba 54 years old." Ordinary Bundle #105, Hardin Circuit Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.



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wished to purchase property in another section of the county. The farm remained intact during the period of Charles Melton's ownership.<sup>57</sup> In 1820 the Charles Melton property passed into the hands of Michael Melton, and it was under his ownership that Lincoln's Mill Creek farm was divided.<sup>58</sup>

The first division of the property took place in 1823, when Michael, Charles, and Jane Melton sold 108 acres to Thomas W. Parrish.<sup>59</sup> This tract remained in the possession of Parrish until 1829, when he sold it to Washington Smith.<sup>60</sup> In 1838, Washington Smith sold the 108 acres to David Smith.<sup>61</sup> In 1853, Elijah Maffet purchased the tract from David Smith.<sup>62</sup> When Elijah Maffet

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<sup>57</sup> Deed Book E. 193 (Lincoln to Melton) Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

<sup>58</sup> Deed Book G. 429 (Charles Melton to Michael Melton) Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

<sup>59</sup> The boundary lines of a portion of the Lincoln Mill Creek farm were resurveyed in the year 1823. Warren, Louis A.: "Mill Creek Home." Unpublished manuscript. Files of the Lincoln National Life Foundation of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Deed Book H. 476 (Michael, Charles and Jane Melton to Parrish) Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

<sup>60</sup> Deed Book L. 108 (Parrish to Washington Smith) Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

<sup>61</sup> Deed Book R. 165 (Washington Smith to David Smith) Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

<sup>62</sup> Deed Book I. 62 (David Smith to Maffet) Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

LAND TRANSACTIONS  
Mill Creek Farm—Hardin County, Kentucky

DIVISIONS	DATE	CONSIGNER	CONSIGNEE	ACRES	DEED BOOK
Original	Sept. 2, 1803	John F. Stater	Thomas Lincoln	238	B. 255
"	Oct. 27, 1814	Thomas Lincoln	Charles Melton	200	E. 193
"	June 15, 1820	Charles Melton	Michael Melton	200	G. 429
1st A	March 22, 1823	Michael Melton	Thomas W. Parrish	108	H. 476
"	March 21, 1829	Thomas W. Parrish	Washington Smith	108	L. 108
"	1838	Washington Smith	David Smith	108	R. 165
"	1853	David Smith	Elijah Maffet	108	I. 62
1st B	Nov. 26, 1828	Michael Melton	John S. Peck	100	L. 33
"	May 21, 1841	John S. Peck	John D. Melton	100	T. 354
"	1873	John D. Melton, (Administrator)	Ben F. Irwin	100	29 308
"	Dec. 13, 1889	Ben F. Irwin	John S. Irwin	100	34 486
"	Feb. 10, 1908	John S. Irwin	John D. Nall	100	54 593
A <sup>a</sup>	June 27, 1903	Maffet, Commissioner	Bohlen Heirs	35	C.2. 102
A <sup>b</sup>	Nov. 22, 1909	Maffet, Commissioner	W. H. Maffet	42	C.2. 149
A <sup>c</sup>	June 27, 1913	Maffet, Commissioner	Elijah Maffet	31½	C.2. 246

## THOMAS LINCOLN'S FARM ON MILL CREEK

died, his tract was divided to satisfy his heirs and three divisions were made of the property. The Mahala L. Bohlen heirs received 35 acres, Elijah Maffet received 31½ acres, while W. H. Maffet received 42 acres.<sup>63</sup> In this division the heirs of Elijah Maffet gained one-half an acre. The total acreage of the three divisions amounted to 108½ acres. The first of the above mentioned tracts is now owned by Harry Hobbs, while the remaining two tracts are in the possession of Burr Eggen.<sup>64</sup> Both of these property owners married into the Maffet family.

The remaining tract, not included in the 1823 land sale, embraced the missing 38 acres. In 1828, this tract of 100 acres, "more or less," was

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<sup>63</sup> Deed Book C. 2, 102 (Maffet Commissioner to Bohlen heirs) Hardin County Court, Commissioner's Deed Book, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

*Ibid.* 246.

*Ibid.* 149.

The surveyor who divided the tract for the three heirs was the late J. T. McNary of Elizabethtown, Kentucky, an acquaintance of the author. McNary was the brother-in-law of William Morgan mentioned by Dr. Barton in his *Paternity of Abraham Lincoln*. Evidence on file leads one to believe that Morgan was mistaken in his statement concerning the Mill Creek farm made to J. L. Irwin, the county court clerk of Hardin County. Barton, William E.: *The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln*. Page 349.

<sup>64</sup> Recent changes in ownership have not been determined as such data is not of significant interest in this historical study.



## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

sold by Michael Melton to John S. Peck.<sup>65</sup> The ownership of this tract, along with an adjacent farm of 157 acres previously purchased by Melton, was included in the above transaction. The combined acreage of the two tracts, according to the deed "Melton to Peck," amounted to 257 acres. While the above parties were figuring the Lincoln tract at 100 acres, they evidently knew, as did Thomas Lincoln, that the acreage was more than the 100 acres, as specified in the deed.

In 1841 John Peck divided the two farms he had purchased from Michael Melton. In making this division he used the original surveyed boundaries and released the 100 acres "more or less" to John D. Melton.<sup>66</sup> In 1873, an administrator gave a deed for the property to Ben F. Irwin, who in turn sold the land to John S. Irwin in 1889.<sup>67</sup> John D. Nall, the present owner, secured possession of the property from John S. Irwin, on February 10, 1908.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Deed Book L. 33 (Melton to Peck) Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

<sup>66</sup> Deed Book T. 354 (Peck to Melton) Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

<sup>67</sup> Deed Book 29, 308 (Melton Administrator to Ben F. Irwin) Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

Deed Book 34, 486 (Ben F. Irwin to John S. Irwin) Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

<sup>68</sup> Deed Book 54, 593 (Irwin to Nall) Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.



## THOMAS LINCOLN'S FARM ON MILL CREEK

The John D. Nall tract is of interest to historians because this portion of the original Lincoln farm contains the old cabin site.<sup>69</sup> A new residence, the third consecutive home to be erected on the farm, today stands on a part of the ancient foundation of the Lincoln cabin.<sup>70</sup> The base stones of the cabin chimney are also to be seen at one side of the present structure.<sup>71</sup> The two-story residence, the second home erected on the Lincoln cabin site, was burned in November 1927.<sup>72</sup> The window sills of the second home contained the old wooden pegs of the original cabin.<sup>73</sup> Traditions relate that the stairway in the second dwelling was the same stairway that was constructed for the Lincoln cabin.<sup>74</sup> The washboards of the resi-

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<sup>69</sup> In all of the above recorded sales, the acreage of the tract is designated as one hundred acres "more or less."

"This tract containing the old Lincoln cabin site now owned by Mr. Nall has never passed out of the family since Thomas Lincoln sold it to Charles Melton one hundred years ago." Warren, Louis A.: "Mill Creek Home." Unpublished manuscript. Files of Lincoln National Life Foundation of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

<sup>70</sup> Questionnaire: John D. Nall to Author. August 1, 1938.

<sup>71</sup> "The old chimney foundation is still at the side of the house that is supposed to be the Lincoln chimney." John D. Nall to Author. August 1, 1938.

<sup>72</sup> Questionnaire: John D. Nall to Author. August 1, 1938.

<sup>73</sup> Questionnaire: G. E. McMurtry to Author. March 23, 1938.

<sup>74</sup> Undoubtedly, this stairway, of approximately fifteen steps is responsible for the myth of a commodious two-story

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

dence that burned were made of the upper loft floor of the pioneer home, while some of the wooden sills were used as window sills. The material salvaged from the old Lincoln cabin was of yellow poplar.<sup>75</sup> Undoubtedly, the Mill Creek cabin was the best Kentucky home Thomas Lincoln ever owned.<sup>76</sup>

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log house on Thomas Lincoln's Mill Creek land. Perhaps this cabin did have a loft, but conservative historians are of the opinion that the structure was not of two-story proportion.

<sup>75</sup> "Thomas Lincoln sold this farm in 1813 (1814) to Michael (Charles) Melton and it has been deeded down from relation to relation unto me. My mother moved here when she was two years old dying at the age of 97 years. There is no Lincoln timber in present house but I have two strips of Lincoln lumber, one in my meat house on which meat has always been hung and one in (my) cellar house. The strip in (the) meat house has two wooden peg holes and a number of old square nails. Dimensions 9½ ft. long and 5½ inches wide (and) 1 inch thick.

When my home burned (November 1927) a rock also burned which my mother said was here since she could remember that was used to beat coffee before coffee mills came into use. It had the initials of T. L. and part of I suppose a date of 18—. The initials were plain, also the 18—, but remainder of date was not plain enough to read. It was a triangular shaped rock, reddish in color and very hard." John D. Nall in letter to Author. August 1, 1938.

<sup>76</sup> This cabin was a permanent home. Undoubtedly, the other Kentucky Lincoln cabins were temporary structures which were hastily erected. If Thomas Lincoln had not encountered numerous land title difficulties, his South Fork and Knob Creek cabins might have been of larger proportions. As it was, the Lincoln cabin homes were of the same size as ninety percent of the other cabins in Hardin County.

## THOMAS LINCOLN'S FARM ON MILL CREEK

The Lincoln Mill Creek Farm today presents a picturesque scene. Likely, comparatively little change in the physical appearance of the farm has taken place since Thomas Lincoln and his family resided there in 1803.<sup>77</sup> The home of the present owner of the farm is approached through a wooded area, and the land presents evidence of being well cared for from an early date. Near the homestead an orchard, of uncertain age, bountifully supplies the occupant with abundant varieties of fruit. This ancient orchard brings to mind the supposition that it might have been planted by the Lincolns. It is, indeed, difficult to understand why the Mill Creek farm remains unnoticed by an ever-increasing number of Lincoln students and admirers, who are making an exhaustive study of every phase of Lincolniana.<sup>78</sup>

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McMurtry, R. Gerald: "The Financial Standing of Lincoln's Father." *The Hardin County Enterprise*. May 14, 1936.

<sup>77</sup> Life long residents of Mill Creek are cognizant of the fact that the Nall farm was once the property of the Meltons and that they acquired the land from the Lincolns.

<sup>78</sup> The Author is particularly indebted to Dr. Louis A. Warren, Director of the Lincoln National Life Foundation of Fort Wayne, Indiana for the use of his maps, charts and unpublished manuscripts pertaining to Thomas Lincoln's farm on Mill Creek.



## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK TRAIL AND THE DOUGLAS SPRING

TWO interesting features of the Mill Creek country are the Lincoln migration trail and the Douglas spring. The historic trail is the route through northern Hardin County followed by the Lincolns in the year 1816 when they migrated from Kentucky to Indiana.<sup>79</sup> While *enroute* to Indiana the migrating family stopped at the Douglas spring to refresh themselves before continuing on to the Brumfield home which was to be an important stop on their itinerary.<sup>80</sup> The Brumfields had moved to a different farm after Thomas Lincoln sold his Mill Creek land to Charles Melton.<sup>81</sup> The migrating Lincoln family consisted of Thomas Lincoln, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, their daughter, Sarah, and son, Abraham, a lad

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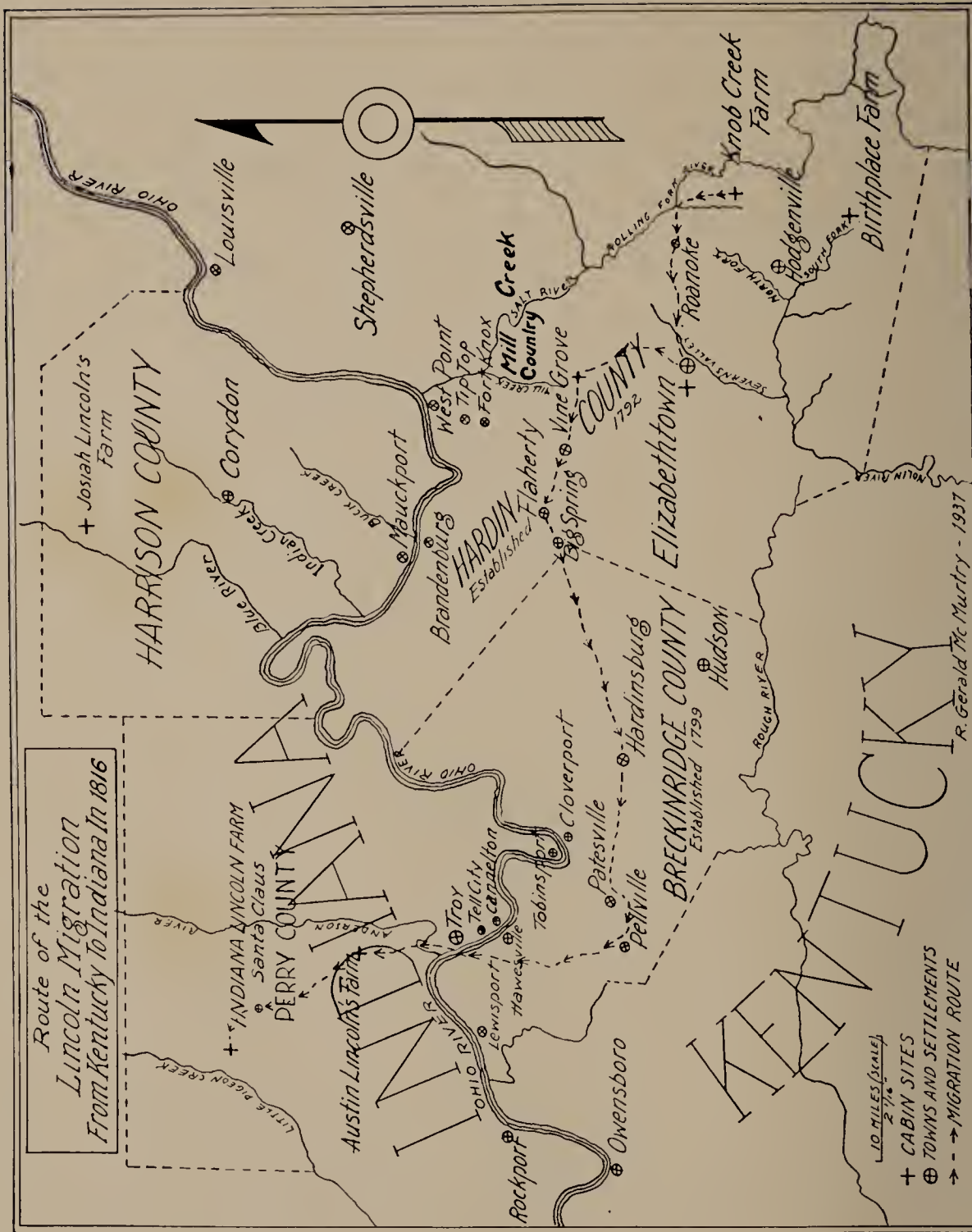
<sup>79</sup> McMurtry, R. Gerald: "The Lincoln Migration from Kentucky to Indiana—1816." Reprinted from the *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 4, December 1937, page 17-20.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, page 17, note 47.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, page 18.







Courtesy of the Indiana Magazine of History, University of Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana.

## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK TRAIL

almost eight years of age.<sup>82</sup> It is believed the family traveled over this trail by horse and wagon. After leaving their Knob Creek home the Lincolns journeyed by way of Elizabethtown, and from there they deviated from their westward course, moving in a northward direction over a county trail called Bullitt's Salt Lick road.<sup>83</sup> A portion of this ancient trail is now called the Shepherdsville road. Historical evidence concerning the Lincoln migration of 1816 definitely places Abraham Lincoln in the Mill Creek country at least once during the period of his Kentucky years.<sup>84</sup>

As they journeyed northward, their first place

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<sup>82</sup> In the year 1860 Abraham Lincoln made the following statement in regard to his age when he moved to Indiana: "In passing let me say that at Rockport you will be in the county within which I was brought up from my eighth (eighth) year—having left Kentucky at that point of my life." Letter from Abraham Lincoln to Cassius M. Clay, July 20, 1860. Original letter in files of Department of Lincolniana, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee.

<sup>83</sup> Complete Report of The Lincoln Highway Memorial Commission. *The Elizabethtown News*, Tuesday, January 7, 1936.

<sup>84</sup> "During these ten years (while living on Mill Creek) I did hear Mrs. Cretia (Lucretia) Austin (daughter of Nancy Lincoln Brumfield) talk to my father and mother at various times and did hear her say that her Uncle Tom and his family stopped several days with her father and mother (Brumfields) when he moved his family to Indiana." Affidavit of G. E. McMurtry, February 8, 1930. Files of the Lincoln Memorial Highway Commission of Kentucky. Many

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

of interest was the Lincoln Mill Creek farm.<sup>85</sup> As the family traveled by their former property, one is inclined to wonder if there was not a moment of sadness and bitterness in the mind of Thomas Lincoln. Here, in 1803, he had invested the bulk of his estate, and here, he had been deprived, presumably by accident, of thirty-eight acres of land amounting to a loss of eighteen pounds. Likely, a clear title to his land would have netted him a handsome profit. This misfortune was one of a series of financial disappointments which had

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residents of the Mill Creek country are of the opinion that Abraham Lincoln returned to that community for short visits after the family moved to Indiana. Some traditions relate that Thomas Lincoln and his son, Abraham, traveled to Mill Creek in the late fall of 1818, after the death of Nancy Hanks Lincoln in Indiana. Here it is believed they visited with the Brumfields for a week. From there it is said that they traveled into the Howe Valley section of Hardin County to visit Mary Lincoln Crume, the sister of Thomas. McMurry, G. E.: "More Lincoln Facts Are Told." The *Elizabethtown News*, February 18, 1931.

According to Lucretia Austin (a first cousin of Abraham Lincoln) Thomas and Abraham visited Mill Creek the winter after the fall of Nancy's death. Lucretia claimed that Thomas helped build a fence on the Brumfield farm and because Abraham was too small to split rails, he cut wedges and splinters to use in the rail fence. Interview with G. E. McMurry, Vine Grove, Kentucky, August 10, 1937.

<sup>85</sup> There are no historical markers pointing the direction to this farm. Older residents of the Mill Creek community know of its location. Few residents of Hardin County consider the Lincoln farm an historical asset.



## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK TRAIL

befallen the father of the president in Kentucky. Now he hoped to avert further losses by the purchase of land in Indiana. Surely, they must have stopped and inquired of Charles Melton and his wife, Sibba, of the condition of their crops, of old friends, and talked of the weather and Indiana.<sup>86</sup>

Upon resuming their journey the Lincoln family continued their travel northward. Their next stop was made at the Douglas spring on the Douglas farm located less than a mile from the Lincoln land.<sup>87</sup> Here, by the side of the pioneer trail, was a watering place which was a favorite stopping point of all the people of the Mill Creek country.<sup>88</sup> At this spring the family ate their lunch and watered their horses. Surely, they must have rested a while at this inviting spot before continuing on their journey. This interesting

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<sup>86</sup> "My family consists of myself (age 62) and wife (Sibla) Sibba 54 years old." June 21, 1820. Ordinary Bundle # 105, Hardin Circuit Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

<sup>87</sup> The Douglas spring is now owned by Amos N. Garner, a grandson of Margaret Douglas, who owned the property in the year 1816. This spring is in its natural state except for a rock retaining wall that has been erected upon the site. There are no historical markers locating the Douglas spring.

<sup>88</sup> In the year 1816 the spring was located in a wooded area, but the land is now cleared. This watering place was situated on the right side of the old road leading from Elizabethtown. The spring is now situated about one hundred yards to the left of a newly surveyed road.

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

spring, running from under a rock fissure, is still to be found in its natural state, just as it was in the fall of 1816 when the Lincolns passed through northern Hardin County. While the Lincolns were at the spring, they conversed with the Douglas family. They told them that they were leaving Kentucky for Indiana and that they were traveling this way in order that they might visit with Bathsheba Lincoln and the Brumfields.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> "Margaret Douglas (died in 1876) lived on the Shepherdsville road about eight miles north of Elizabethtown, just a little south of where the old Dowdell (road) started west from the old Shepherdsville Road. She was a very old woman when she died, must have been up in her eighties, and to the best of my memory has been dead forty years or more. She told me that Thomas Lincoln, Nancy Lincoln, his wife, and the little boy, Abe, stopped at their spring and ate their lunch and informed them that they were leaving Kentucky for Indiana, and were on their way by the way of their sister Nancy Brumfield. At that time many people on the Shepherdsville and Dowdell Roads knew Thomas Lincoln as he made frequent trips to and from Wm. Brumfields, and prior to this time, for twelve years, had owned a farm . . . south of the Douglas farm." Affidavit of F. O. Viers, June 23, 1930. Files of Lincoln Memorial Highway Commission of Kentucky.

"The Lincoln family while enroute to Indiana stopped at the Douglas spring, watered their horses and then ate their lunch. In their wagon they had an inlaid cherry and poplar corner cupboard made by Thomas Lincoln. While fording one of the swollen streams in this vicinity they lost the cupboard and did not attempt to recover it due to the difficulty of transporting this large piece of furniture to Indiana. After the Lincolns traveled on to their destination,

## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK TRAIL

Traveling on for a considerable distance over the Bullitt Salt Lick trail, they turned westward at the E. A. Viers' place, following the old Dowdell Ferry road in the direction of William Brumfield's home.<sup>90</sup> The Brumfields lived approximately five miles from the farm that Thomas Lincoln once owned. This juncture of the Bullitt Salt Lick trail (Shepherdsville road) with the Dowdell Ferry road at the E. A. Viers property was located approximately eight miles north of Elizabethtown. At the E. A. Viers property (now owned by Mrs. Emma Cowley and Waverly Viers) they proceeded to travel by James McWilliams' place (now owned by Mrs. J. H. Shelton) to Isaac Emery's place (now owned by Mrs. V. Shelton and F. O. Viers) to Capt. John Hibbs' place (now

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the cupboard was taken from the creek and became the property of John T. Cowley. Later the Lincoln cupboard was sold at the Cowley sale to Mrs. Martha Viers for fifty cents. Mrs. Viers then gave this piece of furniture to Mrs. Amos Garner and the cupboard is now in her home located on the Douglas farm." Interview with Mrs. Emma Cowley at her home August 22, 1938.

This cupboard was purchased by the author from Mrs. Amos Garner August 23, 1938. Affidavits regarding the cupboard were secured from Mrs. Amos Garner and Mrs. Emma Cowley, August 23, 1938.

<sup>90</sup> McMurry, R. Gerald: "The Lincoln Migration from Kentucky to Indiana—1816." Reprinted from the *Indiana Magazine of History*. Vol. XXXIII, No. 4, December, 1937, page 17.



## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

owned by Mrs. Jenny Leonard) to Hezekiah Stovall's place (now owned by Mrs. Leonard) to Rev. David Carr's place (now owned by Grover Cook) to John Cowley's place (now owned by Josh Bird) and to William Brumfield's place (now owned by E. J. French) and there they stopped.<sup>91</sup> After leaving the Bullitt Salt Lick trail, (E. A. Viers property) the family traveled the Dowdell Ferry road for two or three miles in a northwesterly direction, then they turned to a pioneer trail (established 1802) that ran by the home of their relatives.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* Note 48, page 17.

Affidavit of F. O. Viers, June 23, 1930. Collection of G. E. McMurtry of Vine Grove, Kentucky.

<sup>92</sup> "My mother, who died in the year 1915 and was 82 years old at her death, was the youngest daughter of the large family of David Carr, who was a neighbor to the same Wm. Brumfield, who married the sister of Thomas Lincoln and lived less than one half mile from the same Wm. Brumfield and his family. I have often heard my mother repeat what an older sister had told her in regard to the Lincoln family, stopping for a short visit with Wm. Brumfield, Thomas Lincoln's brother-in-law, and also said some of them came riding and some of them came walking. She said that they were moving from Kentucky to Indiana." Affidavit of W. G. Cowley, January 18, 1930. Files of the Lincoln Memorial Highway Commission of Kentucky.

"He (Colonel John Cowley) told me, (John H. Hibbs) he saw Lincoln when he was a small boy, when Tom Lincoln moved to Indiana, and that Tom Lincoln was a mighty poor man as he had all his things in one wagon and room for his wife and family. He said he saw and remembered the



## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK TRAIL

After the termination of their short visit with the Brumfields the Lincolns continued their journey traveling directly west. They traveled down Buffalo Run to Mill Creek passing within the first mile the First Regular Baptist Church of Mill Creek and the church cemetery in which the mother, sister and relatives of Thomas were eventually to find their last resting places.<sup>93</sup> They followed the same pioneer trail in leaving the Brumfield home that they took enroute to the farm. This pioneer road (established 1802) was a secondary trail of the Dowdell Ferry road. After traveling westward a short distance the Lincolns made their departure from that part of northern Hardin County known as the Mill Creek country.<sup>94</sup>

Undoubtedly the Lincoln-Mill Creek trail will

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boy and girl in the wagon that passed his father's house (Mill Creek community) and that the boy must have had lots of horse sense and studied hard or he never would have been President of the United States. He lived the last 25 years of his life with no good feelings for that boy he saw in the wagon with Tom Lincoln on their way to Indiana in the year 1816." Affidavit of John H. Hibbs, May 16, 1931. Collection of G. E. McMurry of Vine Grove, Kentucky.

<sup>93</sup> "They then went west down Buffalo Run to Mill Creek." Affidavit of F. O. Viers, June 23, 1930. Collection of G. E. McMurry of Vine Grove, Kentucky.

<sup>94</sup> "They followed the old pioneer trail (established in 1802) through Vine Grove (Viney Grove) and after crossing Otter Creek, they traveled through what is now known as the community of Flaherty to the town of Big Spring." McMurry, R. Gerald: "The Lincoln Migration from Kentucky

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

some day be a super highway. In the final report of the Lincoln Memorial Highway Commission of Kentucky this portion of the Mill Creek road was included as a segment of the proposed Lincoln Memorial Highway to extend from Lincoln's birthplace in Kentucky to his tomb in Springfield, Illinois.<sup>95</sup> When this area is made accessible to the public, Kentucky will offer as an attraction to the tourist, an hitherto unknown territory that is quaint and picturesque, and of great historical importance. The Mill Creek country will eventually become an outstanding link in the story of the Lincoln family in Kentucky.<sup>96</sup>

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to Indiana—1816." Reprinted from the *Indiana Magazine of History*, vol. XXXIII, No. 4, December, 1937, page 20.

While excavating a bridge site across Otter Creek in March 1938, workmen discovered traces of the old pioneer trail which was established in the year 1802.

<sup>95</sup> Complete Report of The Lincoln Highway Memorial Commission. The *Elizabethtown News*. Tuesday, January 7, 1936.

<sup>96</sup> If the route of travel followed by the Lincoln family through the Mill Creek community in the year 1816, should be marked with appropriate signs the historical attractiveness of this community would be materially increased.

## THE WILLIAM BRUMFIELD HOME

WHEN Thomas Lincoln sold his farm on Mill Creek, in the year 1814, it is believed his mother, sister, brother-in-law and their children moved to the farm purchased by Nancy's husband, William Brumfield.<sup>97</sup> This farm was located on Brumfield's Branch in the Mill Creek community.<sup>98</sup> The Brumfield farm, where Bathsheba and her daughter lived for more than thirty

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<sup>97</sup> "When the Lincoln family visited the Brumfield's *enroute* to Indiana, they were living on a different farm, as Thomas Lincoln had sold his property to Charles Melton two years before." McMurtry, R. Gerald: "The Lincoln Migration from Kentucky to Indiana—1816." Reprint from the *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 4, December 1937, page 18.

<sup>98</sup> "William Brumfield's buildings were all on Brumfield's Branch that emptied into Mill Creek about 100 yards South of Hynes' Lick—I have an old paper (map) with 'Brumfield's Branch' marked all the way through my farm to Mill Creek. This branch started near the top of the ridge or East of the Brumfield farm and I expect it furnished the water for all the mash in his distillery. Their free flowing spring was West of the house. I think this old map was made in 1819, and it mentions Brumfield's (property) line." G. E. McMurtry to Author, June 6, 1938. Hynes' Lick is a very small stream named for Andrew Hynes the founder of Elizabethtown, Kentucky.



## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

years, was situated approximately twelve miles from Elizabethtown and five or six miles from the farm that Thomas Lincoln once owned. The extent of the Brumfield farm was approximately 200 acres or more, and evidently William Brumfield was a successful farmer as there is evidence that he leased for cultivation two additional fields of Mill Creek land from Samuel Haycraft, Junior.<sup>99</sup> Some historians are of the belief that William Brumfield and his family had moved from the Lincoln farm before the year 1814, and that at the time of the sale of the Lincoln property Charles Melton, the purchaser, was residing there as a tenant.

Located on the Brumfield farm was a large log

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<sup>99</sup> Agreement—Samuel Haycraft and Ralph L. (Lincoln) Crume. “Articles of agreement entered into between Samuel Haycraft of the one part, and Ralph L. Crume of the other part, both of Hardin County, Kentucky. The said Samuel Haycraft has this day leased and rented to the said Ralph L. Crume from the first day of February last to the 10th day of March 1846, two fields or lots of inclosed ground on the tract of 400 acres on Mill Creek including Hynes’ Lick owned by the said Haycraft and wife, being the same fields on which William Brumfield lately held as lease which expired on the first day of February last.” Deed Book U. Page 469, Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

The Brumfield farm today contains approximately 170 acres. About 55 acres were sold off of this tract several years ago. If no other sales were made and if the above acreage is correct the original Brumfield farm contained 225 acres.



## THE WILLIAM BRUMFIELD HOME

house constructed about the year 1800.<sup>100</sup> The name of the original owner of this building is not known. This commodious pioneer log dwelling had two large chimneys, built of stone and topped with brick. About fifty years ago (1888) the house burned, and all that remains today is the old kitchen chimney. According to traditional evidence, there was located in close proximity to the Brumfield house, a smaller log house.<sup>101</sup> Legend relates that this was the home of Bathsheba Lincoln. It is not known which was the older of the two houses. Bathsheba's log house, it is believed, had the same kind of chimney (stone topped with brick) as did the larger Brumfield home.<sup>102</sup> The "Granny" Lincoln log house did not burn at the

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<sup>100</sup> Undoubtedly this large log house was constructed before the Brumfields moved from Thomas Lincoln's Mill Creek farm.

<sup>101</sup> "Did you know before that 'Granny' (Lincoln) had a large one room log house with stone chimney topped out with brick about 100 yards south of the large Brumfield dwelling— Have seen it many times when a boy as it was as well taken care of as the larger home." Letter of G. E. McMurtry to Author. March 18, 1938. Files of Department of Lincolniana, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee.

<sup>102</sup> "The 'Granny' Lincoln log house had the same kind of chimney as the Brumfield dwelling—stone topped out with brick and looked as old as the original Brumfield dwelling. It may have been older than the large house. I do not know when it was built but they kept it under good cover and used it as a storage house." Questionnaire: G. E. McMurtry to Author. March 23, 1938.

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

time of the destruction of the Brumfield homestead. After the burning of the Brumfield house, the smaller log cabin was dismantled and attached to the Brumfield kitchen chimney. The original logs are today boxed with rough, inch-oak planks, and are well preserved.<sup>103</sup>

During the period of the Brumfield's residence on Mill Creek the surrounding country was densely wooded. It is believed, however, that the land was cleared in the near vicinity of the Brumfield homestead.<sup>104</sup> On the farm was to be found an excellent spring and other natural resources so necessary for a pioneer farmer. The homestead was located at an important geographical point in this area, making the farm an attractive stopping place for neighboring travelers.<sup>105</sup> Here

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<sup>103</sup> "When the original Brumfield house burned several years ago the owner moved 'Granny' Lincoln's log house and put it up against the kitchen chimney and have heard that 'Granny's' home was built for her before Tom moved to Indiana. James French then traded for an old log room and put it up against the 'Granny' room in which Tom and Abe had both evidently been." *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> Hubert Shelton, address—Vine Grove, Kentucky, R.F.D. # 4, is the present owner of the Brumfield farm.

<sup>105</sup> "In 1829, a number of the descendants of Mordecai Lincoln, eldest brother of Abraham Lincoln's father, Thomas, were removing from Grayson County, Kentucky, to a point in Illinois within the present county of Hancock, and then designated as 'the head of the rapids,' they made what we have learned to call a detour, and spent a night with their





### BRUMFIELD KITCHEN CHIMNEY

The original kitchen chimney of the William Brumfield home on Mill Creek, in Hardin County, Kentucky. This chimney was standing when Bathsheba Lincoln lived on Mill Creek, and was there in the year 1816 when Thomas Lincoln and family visited the Brumfields while on their way to Indiana.





## THE WILLIAM BRUMFIELD HOME

sprang up a small backwood settlement. To accommodate friends and neighbors, the Brumfields had a stillhouse, a storehouse and a blacksmith shop. This stopping place was a voting precinct for three-day elections, and here was a public speaking point for pioneer politicians.

Many have wondered why the Lincolns tarried several days, in the late fall of 1816, at the Brumfields while they were enroute to Indiana. Possibly one explanation for the several days visit was that Thomas Lincoln hoped to collect a sum of money due him before taking up residence in Indiana. Traditions relate that while the Lincolns were visiting the Brumfields, Thomas went over into the Crandal Shed neighborhood, into what is now Jefferson County, to collect a debt that was due him from a man who ran a distillery.<sup>106</sup> Undoubtedly, Sarah and Abraham in the

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Aunt Nancy Brumfield, their father's youngest sister. She was living on Mill Creek, close to where Thomas Lincoln owned his first Hardin County farm in 1803. Nancy and her husband, William Brumfield, were even then living there; for they had been married in 1801, and had established their home in that locality." Barton, William E.: *The Women Lincoln Loved*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Copyright 1927. Page 51. Used by special permission of the publishers.

<sup>106</sup> "Colonel Jim Hayes said that when Thomas Lincoln went to Indiana to live, he was at Wm. Brumfield's for several days and while there went over by the Crandal Shed neighborhood into what was then Jefferson County to collect some money that was owing him by a man that ran a still to make

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

meantime enjoyed playing with their cousins Mary, Elizabeth, Lucretia and Susan, the four daughters of the Brumfields.<sup>107</sup> Here for the last time Bathsheba, the grandmother of the future president, was to see young Abraham who was named for her husband who had been massacred by the Indians thirty years before. Abraham Lincoln was her youngest son's youngest child.<sup>108</sup>

Today, perhaps, the only man-made things now visible in this community, upon which young Abraham Lincoln and his family might have gazed, is the old brick and stone kitchen chimney and the boxed logs of the "Granny" Lincoln cabin home. Today a dilapidated house stands on the historical site of the Brumfield home. The still-house, storehouse, and blacksmith shop are gone.

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whiskey." Affidavit of F. O. Viers, June 23, 1930, Collection of G. E. McMurtry of Vine Grove, Kentucky.

The Crandal Neighborhood is near Salt River.

<sup>107</sup> *Lincoln Lore*: "Abraham Lincoln's First Cousins." No. 322, June 10, 1935.

<sup>108</sup> "This may have been the first, and it certainly was the last, time the old lady (Bathsheba) had seen young Abraham, named for the man she married in Virginia and accompanied over the mountains, by whose side she had worked, and over whose murdered body she wept." Editorial: "Lincoln Lore": *The Courier-Journal*, Louisville, Kentucky, June 14, 1936.

*The Filson Club History Quarterly*, Louisville, Kentucky, Vol. 11, (Eleven), No. 3, July 1937. "The Filson Club in the 1937 Pilgrimage, Conducted by Louis A. Warren," by R. C. Ballard Thruston. (See notes 14 and 111)

## THE WILLIAM BRUMFIELD HOME

Travelers no longer stop to visit, nor buy liquor, shoe their horses, vote in three-day elections or hear Kentucky politicians. Only the boxed logs and the old stone chimney remain of what was once an active pioneer settlement.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> "The real home of the Lincolns is Mill Creek, not Elizabethtown, and not the old farm near Nolin in the eastern part of Hardin County, which was made LaRue County in 1842." Editorial: "Hardin County, the Home of the Lincolns," *The Elizabethtown News*, June 23, 1936.

## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK CEMETERY

THE three important Kentucky cemeteries containing the remains of the pioneer Lincoln family are found in obscure locations, withdrawn from the main arteries of travel.<sup>110</sup> It is believed that Captain Abraham Lincoln, the president's grandfather, lies buried in the cemetery of the Long Run Baptist church in Jefferson County. His burial plot is unmarked, and tradition relates that his grave is now located under the church building of the Long Run Baptist congregation.<sup>111</sup> Another Lincoln burial ground is the Redmond cemetery in LaRue County. Here, it is believed, the infant Thomas, the president's younger brother, has his resting place.<sup>112</sup> Five

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<sup>110</sup> *Lincoln Lore*: "The Burial Places of the Lincolns," No. 268, May 28, 1934.

<sup>111</sup> *The Filson Club History Quarterly*, Louisville, Kentucky, Vol. 11 (Eleven), No. 3, July 1937. "The Filson Club in the 1937 Pilgrimage, conducted by Louis A. Warren," by R. C. Ballard Thruston. (See notes 14 and 108)

Barton, William E.: *The Lineage of Lincoln*, page 65.

<sup>112</sup> Wylie, Francis E.: "Grave of Lincoln's Infant Brother Believed Found," *Herald Post*, Louisville, Kentucky, October 23, 1933.

Wylie, Francis E.: "A Recent Discovery in Kentucky's





Lincoln Cemetery  
 Memorial  
 Kentucky State Park No. 17  
 HARDIN COUNTY



**Legend**

X Site of original Mill Creek Baptist Church. (not extant)  
 Size of original building approximately 33' X 33'  
 (Portion of foundation extant)

Members of Lincoln family interred in the Mill Creek Baptist Church Cemetery.

- Bathsheba Lincoln
- Nancy Lincoln Brumfield
- William Brumfield
- Mary Brumfield Crume
- Frances Harrison French

Hays Property

Mc Murtry Property

90ft. road to park entrance.

Hays Property

Approximate Location of Sof Miller Line

Surveyed by George Crume - 1936.

Drawn by Shelburne Slamper '38



Mill Creek Baptist Church

G.E. McMurry Line surveyed April 4, 1781.

975'

214.5'

Mill Creek Baptist Church Cemetery

Quit-Claim Deed

148.5'

165'

Pioneer Road 1802'

Provisions made in Survey for

## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK CEMETERY

members of the Lincoln family are interred in the First Mill Creek Baptist churchyard, located twelve miles north of Elizabethtown and about two and one-half miles from the Dixie Highway (31W). Of all the Lincoln cemeteries in Kentucky, perhaps the Baptist Mill Creek burial ground has one of the greatest claims for historical interest.<sup>113</sup>

The First Mill Creek Baptist Church, which was erected in the churchyard cemetery was square and was constructed of hewn oak logs, thirty-three feet long from center notch to center notch.<sup>114</sup> A portion of the foundation of this old structure is still in existence. Nearby, a pioneer trail (established 1802), of which traces can today

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Lincoln Country," *Kentucky Progress Magazine*, Louisville, Kentucky, Winter Edition, pages 88-91.

Jackson, George F.: Grave of Lincoln's Infant Brother Discovered. A reprint from *American Motor Traveler*. (Folder)

<sup>113</sup> It is believed that Ralph Crume and his wife, Mary Lincoln Crume (a sister of Thomas Lincoln) are interred in an abandoned cemetery in Breckenridge County. Many distant relatives of the pioneer Abraham Lincoln lie buried in various country churchyard cemeteries in northern Hardin County.

<sup>114</sup> Owen Cowley, a resident of this community, purchased in the year 1854 the original logs of the Mill Creek Baptist Church for \$50.00. In making this purchase he "stepped off" the dimensions and roughly figured the church to be 33' x 33' in its original state.

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

be discerned, traversed the graveyard plat and served the pioneers with an artery of travel. All the documentary records kept by this church have been destroyed, however, early church histories record the fact of the church's existence as early as 1797.<sup>115</sup> The churchyard cemetery today remains in its primitive state. Here are to be observed all types of burial markers, from the primitive, unlettered flat head and foot stones, the rough cut sandstones with the inscriptions weathered away, to the smooth marble slabs with deeply chiseled letters and figures which are today legible.<sup>116</sup> The old English word "consort" is used in several inscriptions instead of the word "wife." Chiseled indentations show where pioneer people

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<sup>115</sup> McMurry, G. E.: History of the First Regular Baptist Church of Mill Creek, Unpublished manuscript. Collection of G. E. McMurry of Vine Grove, Kentucky.

The Severn's Valley Baptist Church of Elizabethtown, Kentucky, established June 18, 1781, sent out colonies to form the following churches: Nolin, Middle Creek, Rudes Creek, Youngers Creek, *Mill Creek*, Mt. Zion, Gilead and perhaps others. Spencer, J. H.: *A History of Kentucky Baptists*, Vol. 1, page 23.

Other Mill Creek Communities in Kentucky are to be found in Monroe, Nelson, and Jefferson Counties. Perhaps many other communities in the state bear the same name.

<sup>116</sup> The first manufactured tombstone erected in the Mill Creek Cemetery was placed over the grave of Eveline Carrico, (died March 22, 1835). The grave of her husband Isaac Carrico is unmarked.



## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK CEMETERY

attempted to cut names and dates to mark the graves of their loved ones, but wind, rain, sun, freezes and thaws have all but obliterated these crude inscriptions.<sup>117</sup>

Just such a cemetery as is located here would have perhaps appealed to President Lincoln. The quietness of the Mill Creek "God's Acres," its pioneer atmosphere, its picturesque setting, its serenity and isolation would have impressed the martyred statesman. In fact Lincoln's interest in such primitive burial places has been revealed by Isaac N. Arnold, a close friend of the Lincolns. Arnold stated that Mary Todd Lincoln related, in October, 1874, the following incident, during which time the president mentioned death and his last resting place:

"A short time before his death, on the visit of the President and Mrs. Lincoln to City Point and Richmond before spoken of, as they were taking a drive on the banks of James River, they came to an old country graveyard. It was a retired place, shaded with trees, and early spring flowers were opening on nearly every grave. It was so quiet and attractive that they stopped the carriage and walked through it. Mr. Lincoln seemed thoughtful and impressed. He said, 'Mary, you are younger than I.

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<sup>117</sup> The Mill Creek Cemetery was abandoned in the year 1854. The present Mill Creek Baptist Church and cemetery are located one mile west of the original site.

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

You will survive me. When I am gone, lay my remains in some quiet place like this.'"<sup>118</sup>

The primitive hardships of the earthly existence of these departed Mill Creek pioneers, their undoubting religion, stern morality and uncompromising courage transforms this old graveyard into hallowed ground. An historically minded Hardin County citizen has quaintly stated that:

"The Mill Creek pioneers will all be scooped up together on Judgment Day. A selection will have to be made of the people buried in the more modern cemeteries."<sup>119</sup>

While residing on Mill Creek, Bathsheba Lincoln, the widow of Captain Abraham Lincoln, passed away at the Brumfield home.<sup>120</sup> The date of the death of the aged grandmother is not defi-

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<sup>118</sup> Arnold, Isaac N.: *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*. A. C. McClurg & Co., Copyright 1901. Page 435. Used by special permission of the publisher.

<sup>119</sup> Statement of G. E. McMurtry to Bailey P. Wootton, Director of Kentucky State Parks, July 10, 1936.

<sup>120</sup> "Lucretia Austin was the daughter of Wm. Brumfield and Nancy Lincoln Brumfield and I knew her very well. She lived on and owned the Wm. Brumfield farm, where she was born and raised, and took care of her father and mother in their old days, as they had taken care of the widow of Abraham Lincoln, the first, after he was killed in an Indian battle." Affidavit of F. O. Viers, June 23, 1930. Collection of G. E. McMurtry of Vine Grove, Kentucky.

## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK CEMETERY

nately known, even though traditional evidence is not lacking regarding the time. A great-grandson of the pioneer woman, Mr. J. L. Nall, stated that she died in the year 1836, at the age of 110 years.<sup>121</sup> Other statements have revealed that Bathsheba made her home with the Brumfields until her death, in the year 1832.<sup>122</sup> Up to the present no documentary evidence has been discovered which proves conclusively the date of

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<sup>121</sup> Letter of J. L. Nall to W. H. Sweeney, Newspaper clipping, "How Lincoln Got Name of Abraham." Date and paper unknown. R. T. Durrett Scrap-book, Library of Chicago University, Chicago, Illinois.

<sup>122</sup> The general concensus of opinion in Hardin County is that Bathsheba Lincoln died in the year 1833.

"Frances Bennett kept the (Nall) family Bible and Ernest Nall's wife and daughter took such a fancy to it while on a visit here (Hardin County) from Beaumont, Texas, that Mrs. Bennett gave them the Bible, and I am certain that Ernest Nall informed me that 'Granny' Lincoln died in 1833." G. E. McMurtry in letter to author May 18, 1938.

Unfortunately, the Lincoln entries in the Nall family Bible do not mention the name of Bathsheba Lincoln.

"The first Lincoln mentioned in our (Nall) family Bible is Nancy Linkhorn (Lincoln) born March 25, 1780, married February 12, 1801 to William Brumfield, and died October 7, 1843. Nancy was one of the daughters of Bathsheba and both of them were buried in Hardin County, Kentucky." Agnes Nall Park (daughter of Ernest Nall) in letter to author. May 27, 1938.

It is of interest to note that the date of Nancy Lincoln's marriage to William Brumfield is recorded in the Nall family Bible as February 12, 1801.



## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

her death.<sup>123</sup> Her remains are interred in the Mill Creek churchyard.<sup>124</sup> Here she sleeps surrounded by pioneers of her own and other generations, all of whose lives were lived in primitive simplicity.<sup>125</sup> Early residents state that a hand-hewn stone, picked up perhaps from a field or creek bottom, approximately three feet in height, was placed at the head of her grave, with the initials "B. L." carved on the smoothed surface. Vandals and deterioration have practically destroyed the stone, and today only a small portion of the original stone remains to mark the site of her burial.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Dr. Barton made the statement that: "Bathsheba lived to a great age, dying in 1836." Barton, William E.: *The Lineage of Lincoln*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Copyright 1929. Page 74. Used by special permission of the publishers.

Barton was of the opinion that Bathsheba was usually called "Granny Basheby." Barton, William E.: *The Women Lincoln Loved*, page 52.

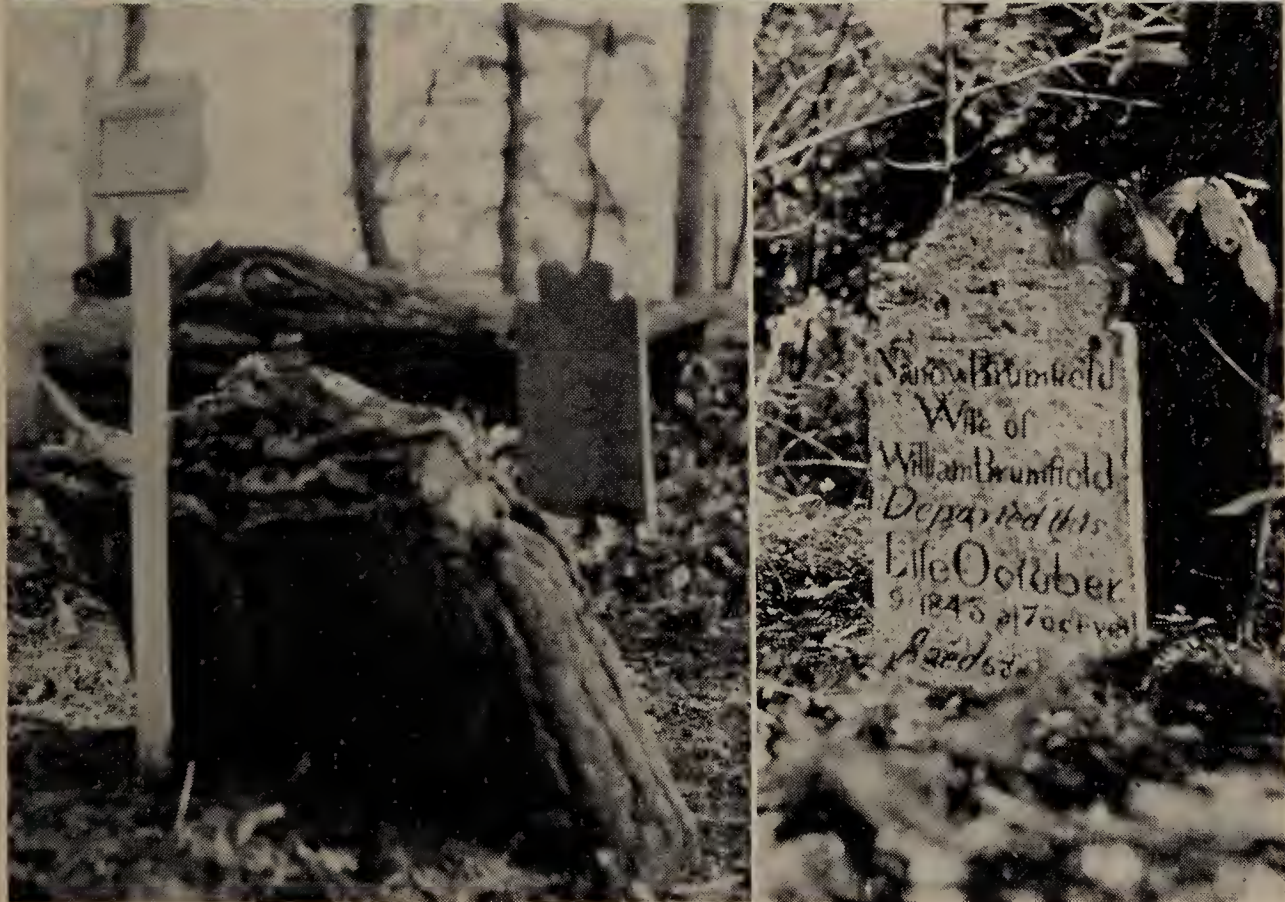
<sup>124</sup> "My great-grandmother, who was the grandmother of the president, . . . is buried at the old Mill Creek church, and I suppose I am the only living person that knows where her grave is." Letter of J. H. Nall to W. H. Sweeney. Newspaper clipping, "How Lincoln Got Name of Abraham." Date and paper unknown.

It is believed that Bathsheba's funeral was preached by the Rev. Jacob Rogers, an early pastor of the Mill Creek Baptist Church. He served as minister for that church for twenty-two years, and it was during his pastorate that the grandmother passed away.

<sup>125</sup> Editorial: "Fifty Trains of Gold." *The Louisville Times*, August 12, 1936.

<sup>126</sup> "If the road should be improved before beginning of





*Photographs courtesy of Lincoln National Life Foundation of Fort Wayne, Indiana.*

### FIRST MILL CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH CEMETERY

*Top:* Lincoln lot in the First Mill Creek Baptist Church cemetery showing the graves of the Lincolns. *Lower Left:* Grave of Bathsheba Lincoln, the paternal grandmother of Abraham Lincoln. *Lower Right:* Grave of Nancy Lincoln Brumfield, a paternal aunt of Abraham Lincoln.





## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK CEMETERY

A small designatory marker has been set up recently to identify the grave, but the simple unengraved, uncut limestone slab should remain to mark the grave of the woman, whose grandson achieved a place "amongst the princes of the earth."<sup>127</sup> Then, too, future generations who visit

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protection of the cemetery by the state the rest of the headstone, perhaps, would be destroyed. Of course a monument could be erected, but more of a story of the Lincolns and of pioneer conditions is told by the piece of rough limestone than could be told by a handsome monument." Editorial: "Protection First." *The Louisville Times*, July 21, 1937.

"The hand-made sandstone headstones and footstones which mark some of the graves are quite as interesting as those at Harrodsburg, (Kentucky) and the fact that even so poor a marker was denied to a woman whose grandson was to become one of the world's immortals is of more interest than a marble monument 200 feet high at her grave would be." Editorial: "Lincoln Cemetery Deserves States Attention." *The Louisville Times*, June 16, 1936.

<sup>127</sup> "As a shrine—not a State Park—it will be dramatically illustrative if it remains unmarred by expensive treatment." Editorial: "Preserve Simplicity." *The Louisville Times*, August 13, 1936.

In 1933 a tourist party of sixteen from Iowa visited the Mill Creek cemetery. An old gentleman of the party remarked that the cemetery should be one hundred miles north where it would be properly looked after.

In September, 1934, Mr. Howard E. Coffin, of New York City was the leader of a party of seven who desired to visit the Mill Creek cemetery. They were advised by the Louisville Automobile Club to procure a guide at Vine Grove, Kentucky. Upon the arrival of the party at the Mill Creek cemetery, Mr. Coffin stood at the head of the grave of Bathsheba Lincoln, and after removing his hat said: "Here lies the remains of a woman who has, no doubt, helped to give

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

this shrine may know that for a long time after the grave was identified as that of Lincoln's grandmother the county of Hardin and the state of Kentucky did nothing to preserve it, and vandals carried away pieces of the headstone for souvenirs.<sup>128</sup>

Other members of the Lincoln family, who lie buried in the Mill Creek graveyard, are Nancy Lincoln Brumfield, William Brumfield, Mary Brumfield Crume and Frances Harrison French.<sup>129</sup> Nancy Brumfield was the youngest sister of Thomas Lincoln. She is definitely known to have been a daughter of Bathsheba. She was born March 25, 1780, and on February 3, 1801, as has been stated before, she married William Brumfield. The date of her death is October 9, 1843. Nancy and William, who are buried in this historic cemetery, had four children named Mary, Elizabeth, Lucretia and Susan. Only one of these four daughters is buried on Mill Creek. Mary,

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brains, character, and love of humanity to one of the real great men, yet, weeds and briars cover her grave with nothing but a cow path leading to it."

<sup>128</sup> *The Louisville Times*, August 13, 1936.

<sup>129</sup> "Just southwest of the Calvin lot is where President Abraham Lincoln's forebears and kin are buried." McMurry, G. E.: "History of the First Regular Baptist Church of Mill Creek." Unpublished manuscript. Collection of G. E. McMurry of Vine Grove, Kentucky.



## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK CEMETERY

the first child of the Brumfields, was born in Hardin County in 1803. On July 1, 1827 she married Ralph L. Crume, who is believed to have been her first cousin. She died June 15, 1851.<sup>130</sup> Her remains are interred in the Mill Creek cemetery.<sup>131</sup> Elizabeth Brumfield's remains rest in the Howell churchyard cemetery, while Lucretia is buried in the Bogard graveyard.<sup>132</sup> The location

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<sup>130</sup> "Mary, the eldest daughter of William and Nancy Brumfield, was born in 1803 in Hardin County, Kentucky. She married Ralph L. Crume, presumably her cousin, on July 1, 1827, and passed away October 9, 1845." *Lincoln Lore*, "Abraham Lincoln's First Cousins," No. 322, June 10, 1935.

<sup>131</sup> The inscription on the grave stone of Mary Brumfield Crume is as follows: "Mary Crume departed this life June 15, 1851. Aged 48 years, 5 months, 11 days." The date of her death as recorded on her grave stone does not coincide with the date established by historical research. Undoubtedly the grave stone inscription is correct.

According to tradition practically all of the sculptured grave stones in the Mill Creek Baptist churchyard cemetery were the work of a pioneer sculptor named Munford. When the wife (Rebekah) of Munford died (April 12, 1846) he placed a stone over her grave with the proper lettering and inscription. After a while he was confronted with a shortage of desirable stone and at the time of the death of Mary Brumfield Crume he took the grave stone from his wife's grave, plastered up the inscribed side, reversed it, and relettered the opposite side for the grave of Lincoln's first cousin. Munford was paid \$2.50 for this work, and his daughter said that he would not have done this had he not been crazed with drink. As a result of this change of grave stones, the stone marking the grave of Mary Brumfield Crume is inscribed on both sides.

<sup>132</sup> The Howell Churchyard cemetery is located two miles west of Vine Grove, Kentucky.

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

of the grave of Susan is unknown. Frances Harrison French, a great-granddaughter of Bathsheba Lincoln, was buried on Mill Creek in August 1881.<sup>133</sup> She was the last member of the Lincoln family to be interred in the Mill Creek churchyard.

Undoubtedly, the location of some of the pioneer graves of the Lincoln family (except the graves of Nancy Lincoln Brumfield and Mary Brumfield Crume) would have been lost, had not Mrs. Susan Harrison, the granddaughter of Nancy Lincoln Brumfield, relocated them in August 1881. She knew the location of each burial in the Lincoln lot, and she selected the plot of ground for the last resting place of her daughter, Frances Harrison French. The relocation and identification of each of the Lincoln graves, in the year 1881, has enabled historians to feel confident of the correct location of these early Lincoln burials.<sup>134</sup>

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The Bogard Cemetery is located near New Stithton, which is situated near the Fort Knox Military Reservation. (Three miles north of Vine Grove, Ky.)

Lucretia Brumfield married John Austin in 1835.

<sup>133</sup> There is no inscribed stone marking the grave of Frances Harrison French.

<sup>134</sup> "I, John J. French, of Route #4, Vine Grove, Ky., being in the 73rd year of my life make this statement. In August 1879 I married Elizabeth Frances Harrison the daughter of Abner and Susan Harrison and two weeks later we, with

## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK CEMETERY

While the inscription of Bathsheba Lincoln's gravestone has been obliterated, the marker over the grave of Thomas Lincoln's sister still remains in an excellent state of preservation. This ancient marker records the earthly existence of a member of the Lincoln clan, and it serves to connect the present with the remote past. This gravestone is the most interesting tangible evidence of the residence of the Lincoln family on Mill Creek. The inscription of the Nancy Lincoln Brumfield marker is as follows:

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nineteen other persons, moved to South East Missouri. We remained there until the Fall of 1880 and on the account of so much swamp fever we came back to Kentucky; my wife and infant son both being ill of swamp fever, from which she never recovered and died in August 1881. About two weeks before my wife's death her mother, Susan Harrison, came from South East Mo. to be with her, and at her death selected the place for her interment, which was by the side of her Great Great Grandmother, Bersheba Lincoln, in the Lincoln lot in the old First Mill Creek Baptist Church Cemetery. My wife's mother, Mrs. Susan Harrison, was a grand daughter of Nancy Lincoln Brumfield, making her a great grand daughter of Bersheba Lincoln and she knew where each member of her family was buried in the Lincoln lot at this old cemetery and had no trouble in locating the proper place for my wife's last resting place. Before the death of my wife and before the arrival of her mother she requested me, should her mother not arrive until after her death, that she be buried with her own people in the Lincoln lot in the old First Mill Creek Baptist Church Cemetery." Affidavit of John J. French, May 12, 1931. Collection of G. E. McMurtry of Vine Grove, Kentucky.



THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

Nancy Brumfield  
Wife of  
William Brumfield  
Departed this  
Life October  
9, 1843 at 7 o'clock eve  
Aged 63<sup>135</sup>

A concerted effort has been made by citizens of Hardin County and other interested individuals to preserve this ancient graveyard.<sup>136</sup> In order to secure control of the abandoned property, an organization was formed which was called "The Memorial Association of Lincoln and the Lincoln

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<sup>135</sup> "But we do not know at what o'clock or in what month or year her mother died." Barton, William E.: *The Women Lincoln Loved*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Copyright 1927. Page 52. Used by special permission of the publishers.

There is no inscribed stone marking the location of the grave of William Brumfield.

<sup>136</sup> "Hardin County has a state park, according to recent listing of Kentucky parks by Director Bailey P. Wootton, but few people in the county are cognizant of the fact, due to the unapproachability of the area. About the only way it could be reached satisfactorily would be by muleback." Editorial: "Hardin's State Park," *Hardin County Enterprise*, July 8, 1937.

"If the road were built *The Enterprise* says, hundred of visitors annually. . . . The *Times* would say thousands and believe the statement conservative . . . would visit the cemetery." Editorial: "Protection First," *The Louisville Times*, July 21, 1937.



## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK CEMETERY

Pioneers” of New York City. The trustees of this organization were Harvey H. Smith, G. E. McMurtry and E. T. Hutchings.<sup>137</sup> On April 25, 1931, the trustees of the Memorial Association acquired from Edwin Stovall, James H. Stader and Veach Jones, the trustees of the Mill Creek Baptist church, the historical church property. In acquiring this land, the Lincoln Memorial Association agreed that the property would be used solely for park purposes. This land had been in the possession of the Mill Creek Baptist church for more than one hundred and twenty-one years (1936). The amount of land conveyed was less than three-quarters of an acre. Early deeds stated that there were one and three quarters acres in the plat, however, later deeds give the amount of land to be about three-quarters of an acre.<sup>138</sup>

On July 13, 1936, the Memorial Association of Lincoln and The Lincoln Pioneers deeded the cemetery plot, along with other property, to the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The total acreage

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<sup>137</sup> Mr. Harvey Harold Smith is the author of a volume of 482 pages, entitled “*Lincoln and The Lincolns*,” Pioneer Publications, Inc., New York, N. Y., 1931.

<sup>138</sup> Edwin Stovall and Company to Memorial Association of Lincoln and the Lincoln Pioneers of New York, Deed Book 96, page 302, Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

of the property deeded amounted to three acres. This deed provided for a right of way for the proposed Lincoln Memorial Highway. The deed was accepted by Bailey P. Wootton, director of Kentucky State parks.<sup>139</sup> This cemetery is now known as Kentucky State park number 17, and the name "The Lincoln Cemetery Memorial" has been given to the burial plot.<sup>140</sup>

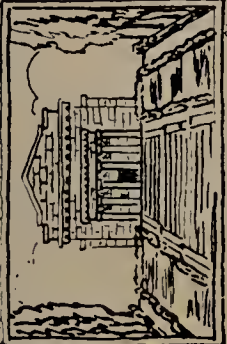
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<sup>139</sup> Memorial Association of Lincoln and The Lincolns to Commonwealth of Kentucky. Deed Book 96, page 304, Hardin County Court, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

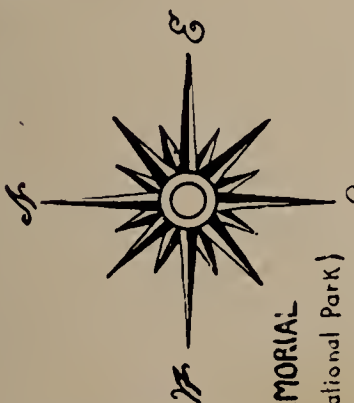
<sup>140</sup> "I read with interest the newspaper clipping referring to the cemetery in which Lincoln's kin are buried. It was with much delight that I learned the people of Hardin County, Kentucky, are now making efforts to establish a state park at the pioneer Lincoln cemetery near Elizabethtown, where you advise me the grandmother of Lincoln . . . is buried. No one can disagree with you that this place should be made a Kentucky State shrine.

"In Illinois, where Lincoln lived from the time of his maturity until he left for Washington for the Presidency, we have many parks and memorials to Lincoln—we are establishing new ones yearly as located by us. If the Lincoln cemetery, of which you speak were in Illinois, you may be assured that we would lose no time in establishing a state park commemorating it if it were practicable. Nothing emphasizes the history of a state or a country so much as memorials of this kind, and no people should be without constant reminders of their own history." Letter of Governor Henry Horner to author, May 14, 1936. Collection of Department of Lincolniana, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee.

"Present plans are to clear the tract with the aid of C.C.C. youths. Headstones in the cemetery will be raised and a rail fence will be put around the historic burying ground.



21) Lincoln Memorial Birthplace Shrine



- 17) LINCOLN CEMETERY MEMORIAL
  - 21) LINCOLN MEMORIAL (National Park)
  - 19) LINCOLN HOMESTEAD MONUMENT
  - 8) PIONEER MEMORIAL
- County Lines - - - - -



8) Marriage Temple housing The Beechland Cabin (Washington County) where Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were married.

KENTUCKY



Map Showing Location of Lincoln National  
and State Parks In  
KENTUCKY

17) Artist drawing of the Old First Mill Creek Baptist Church (Not Extant)



19) The Widow Lincoln's Re-constructed Cabin Near Beechland.







## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK CEMETERY

“The Lincoln Cemetery Memorial” is today almost inaccessible. A country road, five miles long, leads from the Dixie highway (31W) to the abandoned churchyard. This road is passable in dry weather, but very rough.<sup>141</sup> The cemetery is situated by air line only two and one-half miles east from the Louisville and Nashville highway (31W).<sup>142</sup> Running almost parallel in this section

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It is likely that a caretaker's quarters will be constructed. The rebuilding of the old Mill Creek Church nearby, has been proposed.” *Hardin County Enterprise*, “Mill Creek Cemetery Is Made Kentucky State Park Tuesday.” August 13, 1936.

Undoubtedly, when other state parks are established, the number of this park will be changed.

<sup>141</sup> “It is a place of great historical interest and something should be done toward making it a shrine and causing a road to be built thereto. Lying only about three miles from the Fort Knox Military Reservation and in a direct line only two miles from the Dixie Highway, still the place is almost inaccessible.” Boldrick, Samuel J.: “Where Lincoln's Kin are Buried,” *The Elizabethtown News*, May 1, 1936.

<sup>142</sup> “To the people who revere the Lincolns and their early ancestry this spot should be reached by a highway from the Dixie Highway which would only be a few miles to construct, and the little graveyard should be made into an attractive spot with distinctive markers and the history of the people who are buried, who are the ancestors of the Lincoln family. Tourists now passing through the country want to know the history and want to visit all historical spots. The State of Kentucky should unquestionably build this road to the Mill Creek graveyard of the Lincolns, for nearly every tourist of the North coming into Kentucky would want to visit it.” Editorial: “Hardin County The Home of The Lincolns,” *The Elizabethtown News*, June 23, 1936.

## THE KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

with the Dixie highway is the Sheperdsville road, which is now under construction. This road is, likewise, only two and one-half miles eastward from the Cemetery Memorial. In order to connect these two highways, plans have been submitted for a road to link together the two thoroughfares. This road is to be called the "Bathsheba Lincoln Parkway." The route of this proposed highway will be almost identical with the trail followed by the Lincolns in 1816, when they migrated to Indiana.

The proposed "Bathsheba Lincoln Parkway" will be five miles long.<sup>143</sup> Beginning at the Vine Grove junction on the Dixie highway, it will traverse the Mill Creek country, running by the Lincoln Cemetery Memorial and the Brumfield farm.<sup>144</sup> The road will continue eastward, forming a junction with the Shepherdsville road. With the completion of these proposed projects, the the traveling public will have an opportunity to visit the numerous historical sites of the Lincoln

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<sup>143</sup> This proposed road, a segment of the Lincoln Memorial Highway of Kentucky, was placed on the primary system of Kentucky roads during the year 1936. McMurtry, R. Gerald: *"The Lincoln Migration from Kentucky to Indiana—1816."* (Addenda) Page 45.

<sup>144</sup> This road should follow as near as possible the old route surveyed in July, 1802. Order Book No. 1, page 345, Hardin County Court Records, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

## THE LINCOLN-MILL CREEK CEMETERY

Mill Creek country. These roads will enable the tourist to travel over practically the same route taken by Thomas Lincoln in the year 1816, through an area unspoiled by modern progress and industrial development.<sup>145</sup> The Mill Creek country will give a new insight into the events, conditions and environment of Lincoln's childhood years.

At present this entire area is undeveloped. There is no custodian at the Mill Creek cemetery to protect the Lincoln graves from vandals. No markers have been placed along the historic road, indicating the 1816 migration trail. The Brumfield farm remains as mute evidence of early historical associations. The Douglas spring flows on in obscurity, with likely less than a dozen people knowing of its historical background. The Thomas Lincoln Mill Creek farm remains unnoticed, for it is not considered by travelers as important in the study of Lincoln's Kentucky environment. Truly, here is a neglected historical area that has waited long years for its rightful place in history. Undoubtedly, this Lincoln Mill Creek country will some day rank in importance with other historic Kentucky Lincoln shrines.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Unmistakable signs and remains of the pioneer road of 1802 are to be seen along this route.

<sup>146</sup> The author is indebted to Mr. G. E. McMurtry for the use of his historical data concerning the Mill Creek country. Mr. McMurtry is a first cousin of the author's grandfather.

## KENTUCKY LINCOLNS ON MILL CREEK

This book was set on the linotype in Caledonia—a type face designed in 1939 by W. A. Dwiggins. This face, while entirely new, has touches of both Bulmer's Martin and Wilson's Scotch, dating back to around 1790. The type size is twelve point with two point spacing between lines.

Mead Corporation's Bulking Antique text was selected as the most suitable text paper.

Binding fabrics were secured from the Holliston Mills, Inc., and Waverly Quality was chosen. The board used for the cover stiffening is genuine binder's grade.

Typography, printing and binding, including cover designing, was performed by the Kingsport Press, Inc., Kingsport, Tennessee. The interior art work is by Shelburne Stamper.



















